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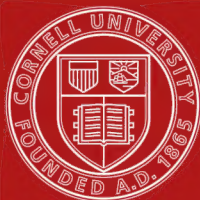
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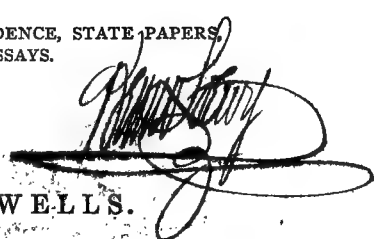
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VOL. II. P. 153.

THE
LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES
OF
SAMUEL ADAMS,
BEING
A NARRATIVE OF HIS ACTS AND OPINIONS, AND OF HIS AGENCY
IN PRODUCING AND FORWARDING THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

WITH
EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE, STATE PAPERS,
AND POLITICAL ESSAYS.

BY
WILLIAM V. WELLS.



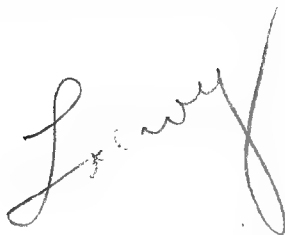
VOL. II.

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CHRONOLOGY

OF THE

LIFE OF SAMUEL ADAMS.

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L I F E
OF
S A M U E L A D A M S.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Extraordinary Effect of the Committee of Correspondence. — Adams its Leader and Master Spirit. — Alarm of the Loyalists. — They attack it in the Press, and are encountered by Adams. — The whole Province forms a Confederacy. — Objects of Adams, in forming the Committee, not merely Provincial. — An Intercolonial System his Ultimate View. — His Origination of such a Scheme proved. — Case of the Gaspee. — Rhode Island Patriots apply to Adams for Advice. — His Views of the Encroachments of Tyranny. — The Home and Family of Adams. — Picture of his Domestic Life. — John Adams describes a Visit to his House.

THOUGH a few of the towns responded at once to the report sent forth by the Boston Committee, it was not until towards the close of the year that the leaven had worked sufficiently to produce all the results that had been anticipated. While the Committee was yet in its infancy, and before similar ones had been generally organized throughout the Province, the Loyalists, who now perfectly comprehended the vastness of the scheme, determined to prevent its consummation. At first, however, few of them believed that success could possibly attend an effort which was struggling into existence at a time when the Province was believed to be remarkably quiet and contented. While the report was preparing, Hutchinson wrote to Pownall:—

“The restless faction in this town have pleased themselves with the hopes of fresh disturbances from the salaries proposed for the judges of the Superior Court, and the usual first step has been taken,—a town meeting. Hitherto they have fallen much short

of their expectations, and even in this town have not been able to revive the old plan of mobbing; and the only dependence left is, to keep up a correspondence through the Province by committees of the several towns, which is such a foolish scheme that they must necessarily make themselves ridiculous."¹

The activity of the first few towns in the vicinity of Boston, in response to the Circular Letter, however, soon alarmed the crown writers, and a studied assault was made upon the Committee, misrepresenting the number at the meeting which formed it, ridiculing their efforts and the want of success that had thus far attended them, and warning the public against encouraging the scheme.² Their recognized antagonist was ready as usual to engage them.

"I am well assured," replied Samuel Adams, a week before Christmas, in defence of the Circular, "it has been forwarded to four fifths of the gentlemen selectmen in the country, the Representatives of the several towns, the members of his Majesty's Council, and others of note, by the direction of the Committee, in pursuance of the vote of the town, with less expense for carriage than two dollars. I have a better opinion of the good sense of the people of this country than to believe they will be diverted from an attention to matters which essentially concern their own and their children's best birthrights, and which every day become more serious and alarming, by the trifles that are every week thrown out, perhaps with that very design, in the Court Gazette more especially. The axe is laid at the root of our happy civil Constitution; our religious rights are threatened; these important matters are the subjects of the letter of this town to our friends and fellow-sufferers in the country. Whether there were present at the meeting three hundred or three thousand, it was a legal meeting; as legal as a meeting of the General Assembly convened by the King's writ, or a meeting of his Majesty's Council summoned by his Excellency the Governor; this I say with due respect to those great assemblies. The selectmen, among whom is the honorable gentleman who was moderator of the meeting, have condescended to publish it

¹ Hutchinson to Pownall, Nov. 13, 1772.

² Massachusetts Gazette, Nov. 26, 1772.

under their hands, that 'a very respectable number attended the meeting through the day.' If it had been as thin a meeting as Mr. Draper's writers would fain have the country think it was, still, being a legal meeting, their proceedings, according to the warrant for calling it, would have been as legal as those of his Majesty's Council when seven gentlemen only (which number by charter constitutes a quorum) out of their whole number, twenty-eight, happen to be present."¹

The attacks of the Tories, however, were no longer formidable. A singular and unprecedented spectacle was presented, astonishing probably even to the most enthusiastic friends of the movement. Letters in reply to the pamphlet came from all quarters, a few indeed being sent on the mere rumor of the occasion, for it was fully the close of the year before some of the interior towns received the report from the Committee, owing, perhaps, to the inclement season and difficulty of communicating with distant places.² But gradually the "great invention" came into harmonious movement, and its beauty and order were apparent. Like the tree of the prophet's vision, it had spread its arms until they reached over all the land. From the communities in the West, where the people of South Hadley, Petersham, Brimfield, Leicester, and Lenox voted bold and patriotic responses; from Essex, whence were heard the voices of Gloucester, Newburyport, Marblehead, Lynn, Danvers, and Beverly; from Middlesex, whose men of Concord, Framingham, Medford, Acton, Stoneham, Medfield, Groton, and Marlborough encouraged the central Committee with words of fervid patriotism;³ from the Old Colony, by the cheering replies of Plymouth, Duxbury, Eastham, Pembroke, and even little Chatham, isolated on the extremity of Cape Cod; from every direction was heard the sound of an uprising people, who seemed to have been touched by the

¹ "Candidus," in the Boston Gazette, Dec. 14, 1772.

² Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, Nov. 31, 1772.

³ Bancroft, VI. 439-443.

magician's wand. The numerous little democratic communities were suddenly combined into a perfectly organized body. The action of the Committee at Boston was conveyed as by so many nerves to every part of the system, and every member sent back its answer. As the replies of the towns began to be published in the Gazette, it was proposed to collect and preserve them in a printed volume, that posterity might know what their ancestors had done in the cause of freedom.¹ In Marblehead, when the report of the Boston Committee was received and accepted, it was ordered "that the pamphlet containing the state of rights, &c., be lodged in the town clerk's office, and read annually at the opening of every March meeting for the election of town officers, until the public grievances are redressed."² In less than a month from the day when Hutchinson had predicted that the Committee "must necessarily make themselves ridiculous," he had found reason to alter his tone, and now, thoroughly alarmed at the great awakening, he invoked the aid of Parliament in a letter to Pownall, acknowledging the success of the scheme; and in his History he admits that "all on a sudden from a state of peace, order, and general contentment, as some expressed themselves, the Province more or less, from one end to the other, was brought into a state of contention, disorder, and general dissatisfaction; or, as others would have it, were roused from stupor and inaction to sensibility and activity."³ As the strength of the confederacy increased, the ablest writers on the government side attempted in vain to retard its progress.

"This," said Leonard, a distinguished Tory writer, "is the foulest,

¹ Boston Gazette, Jan. 18, 1773.

² Proceedings of Marblehead, Dec. 15, in Boston Gazette, Dec. 28, 1772. The Gazette for December contains the response of Dorchester, Roxbury, Plymouth, Cambridge, Taunton, Brooklyn, Marblehead, Townshend, Salem, Charlestown, Sudbury, Lexington, Watertown, Medford, Lynn, and other towns, whose letters were constantly arriving, and were published as fast as received by the Committee, to encourage others.

³ Hutchinson's History, III. 370.

subtlest, and most venomous serpent ever issued from the egg of sedition. It is the source of the rebellion. I saw the small seed when it was implanted ; it was a grain of mustard. I have watched the plant until it has become a great tree. The vilest reptiles that crawl upon the earth are concealed at the root ; the foulest birds of the air rest upon its branches. I now would induce you to go to work immediately with axes and hatchets and cut it down, for a twofold reason, — because it is a pest to society, and lest it be felled suddenly by a stronger arm, and crush its thousands in its fall.”¹

The first positive step in the Revolution had been accomplished in knitting together the resources of the Province. Adams and his friends could now form an exact estimate of the general feeling in Massachusetts, and must have read the responses from the secluded rural districts with the joy of a growing conviction that, beyond doubt, the seeds of freedom which had been planted there were swelling with a new life, and at the proper season would burst forth into luxuriant growth.

The history of the Revolution cannot be told in the biography of any one man, though it is possible to identify every incident of that epoch with some leading men. The Revolution is a great highway of history, which is repeatedly traversed by the biographer in company with some one character, always revealing new phases of the story ; but the main course of the narrative remains unchanged. A few men suggested the successive measures of resistance prior to the commencement of the war. Their inborn knowledge of the New England people enabled them to draw from the inquisitive character of the masses what was required to produce public movements. The spirit of the press, the harangues and motions in town meetings, the proceedings of the committees, the tone of the circulars and handbills, and all the detail that went to make up the general unity of purpose, were carefully suited to the popular understanding.

¹ “*Massachusettensis*,” in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, Jan. 2, 1775.

But even this adaptation could not have succeeded, had not the people themselves been educated in the doctrines of democracy and human rights, and thus prepared for the event. The spirit of liberty pervaded all New England. It was a principle which no man or set of men could either generate or destroy. Its germ came over with the Puritans, and flourished from the settlement of the country. Nurtured on the rocky, barren soil, and purified in the frozen air of the North, the genius of Freedom needed but the occasion to spring up resplendent with truth, clad in the armor of conscious right, and invincible in the virtue of a population of rare intelligence, inured to toil, and taught to despise the luxuries of the nation from whence their ancestors had fled to the New World.

The towns and villages which now rose in unison against oppression had maintained in their origin an existence amid the severest hardships and in the face of savage foes. They had experienced few of the enjoyments known to the pioneers of the West, though equally obliged to struggle for life against the merciless Indian. Save along the rivers and in the valleys which Nature in her rugged mood had scantily placed for the habitations of man, the country found by the settlers of Massachusetts in the seventeenth century was an unpromising field for agriculture. No rolling, flowery prairies, no herds of buffalo cropping the rich grasses, no vast farming districts with generous soil, stretching out to the horizon, and waving with fertility beneath a genial sun, invited the adventurer. Much of the country was a howling wilderness. Pathless pine forests formed the landscape, and sighed mournfully in the winds, and the wolf prowled beneath the snow-laden branches. In scenes like these, so entirely the reverse of the warm and pleasant countries of the South and West, was cultivated the indomitable love of freedom which supported New England through the trials of the Revolution. This spirit, though now oftenest manifesting itself by notable deeds in the capital, existed with no less fer-

vor in the country towns, where the hard-handed tillers rose up at the call of freedom, and stood forth her champions. From the ploughed field and waving meadow, amid the woodlands and cataracts, the voices of liberty were heard with as much earnestness as amid denser populations. And so with individuals. Though the principal characters filled the public eye, biography, for want of material, can never do justice to unnumbered incorruptible men moving in lesser circles, but faithfully and fearlessly performing the part allotted to them.

Hutchinson might well cast about him in his troubles for advice and comfort. He had haughtily refused to call the Assembly when petitioned in October, and, at that time, reposing in fancied security, he felicitated himself upon the general quiet and contentment. As the "new power" spread over the land, the mighty heart throbbing through every artery, he was thrown into a state of ludicrous indecision as to his proper course. Should he convene the Legislature, the reason would be obvious, and he would lose caste among the Loyalists, who always favored an arbitrary, unbending manner to the people, besides virtually admitting the success of the Committee. In a review of these events, written in April of the following year, Mr. Adams says : —

"Perhaps no measure that has been taken by the town of Boston, during our present struggles for liberty, has thwarted the designs of our enemies more than their votes and proceedings on the 20th of November last. . . . Amidst the general anxiety, the memorable meeting was called with design that the inhabitants might have the opportunity of expressing their sense calmly and dispassionately, for it is from such a temper of mind that we are to expect a rational, manly, and successful opposition to the ruinous plans of an abandoned administration ; and it is for this reason alone, that the petty tyrants of this country have always dreaded, and continue still to dread, a regular assembly of the people."¹

On the day following the organization* of the Committee,

¹ "Candidus," in the Boston Gazette, April 12, 1773.

Adams had written to Arthur Lee, in London, an account of it and of the anticipated effects. Lee, in answer, said:—

“I cannot describe how much I am pleased with the spirit with which you oppose the infringement of your rights. I cannot but hope every town in the Province will harmonize with Boston. Nothing will make so deep an impression here as a proof of unanimity and firmness. My countrymen must ever remember what I have before mentioned, that from the justice of the ruling powers in this country they are to expect nothing; from their fears and necessities, everything. I agree entirely with you that the tribute is the indignity that must be done away.”¹

“I am heartily glad,” replied Adams, “to find that the proceedings of this town are so pleasing to you. I have heard that Lord Dartmouth received one of our pamphlets with coldness, and expressed his concern that the town had come into such measures. His Lordship probably will be very much surprised to find a very great number of the towns in this Province (and the number daily increases) concurring fully in sentiments with this metropolis; expressing loyalty to the King and affection to the mother country, but, at the same time, a firm resolution to maintain their constitutional rights and liberties. . . . Every art and every instrument was made use of to prevent the meetings of the towns in the country, but to no purpose. It is no wonder that a measure calculated to promote a correspondence and a free communication among the people should awaken their apprehensions; for they well know it must detect their falsehood, in asserting that the people of this country were satisfied with the measures of the British Parliament and the administration of government.”²

To Richard Henry Lee, with whom about this time Adams commenced a correspondence, he wrote:—

“The friends of liberty in this town have lately made a successful attempt to obtain an explicit political sentiment of a great number of the towns of this Province, and the number is daily increasing. The very attempt was alarming to our adversaries, and the happy

¹ Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, Jan. 25, 1773.

² Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, April 9 and 12, 1773.

effects of it mortifying to them. I would propose it for your consideration, whether the establishment of committees of correspondence among the several towns in every Colony would tend to promote that general union upon which the security of the whole depends.”¹

This last extract indicates a very important feature in the formation of these Provincial committees. It reveals the fact that although Adams, in setting the ball in motion, actually organized only his native Province, his views in reality aimed at much grander results, and included a continental system, towards the establishment of which the local institution was merely preliminary. If we glance back over the extracts from his writings, given in these pages, it will appear that his great theme had been, from the commencement of the troubles with the mother country, a *union of the Colonies* to make common cause against the encroachments of tyranny. His attention was never diverted from this vital point, which he considered to be the basis of all successful opposition. There is scarcely any time, from 1764 to 1774 inclusive, in which we do not find him directing his countrymen to the importance of a unity of purpose and concert of action among the several Provinces, either by public papers of the town or the Legislature, circular letters, motions in the Assembly, political essays, or private letters. The instances which have been handed down are conclusive upon this head, and furnish positive evidence, not only of his principal agency in forwarding such a union, but of his priority in the conception of the scheme, as a measure immediately connected with the Revolution. “Massachusetts,” says Bancroft, “organized a Province, Virginia promoted a Confederacy.”² This is true, if we look only at public acts; but it must, in some degree, lose its significance when associated with the fact, that the originator of the whole system unquestionably had in view from the first that very confed-

¹ Samuel Adams to Richard Henry Lee, April 10, 1773 (*Life of Lee* by his Grandson, R. H. Lee, I. 88).

² *History of the United States*, VI. 455.

eracy and union of all the Colonies, to the successful accomplishment of which the preliminary organizing of the Province was indispensable. His ultimate idea, in establishing the local committees in Massachusetts, was to accomplish the still more important establishment of intercolonial correspondence; and though Virginia nobly inaugurated the measure in the following year, it none the less had its origin in the brain of Adams. The earliest suggestion of an intercolonial committee of correspondence was in 1764, when, as Bancroft says, "the Legislature adopted the principles and the line of conduct which the town of Boston, at the impulse of Samuel Adams, had recommended."¹ The plan, as perfected, was but the practical working of his idea. He saw the necessity of a central Colony, like Virginia, taking the lead, and was ever prudently on his guard against an apparent desire in Massachusetts to assume an ambitious prominence in the struggle. Provincial and intercolonial committees of correspondence were distinct institutions, and some four months apart in their birth; but, in the mind of Samuel Adams, the first was but a stepping-stone to the second. Three months later, Benjamin Church, in his March oration, thanked God that the Boston Committee of Correspondence had given the alarm to the other Colonies, who by that means were approaching a "combination for their mutual interest and defence." Church was a member of the Committee, had the confidence of Samuel Adams, and spoke that he knew. The words of John Adams, as "Nov-anglus," already quoted, on the subject of local committees, are also contemporary evidence to the same effect. He says "every Colony adopted the measure," which had been the means of cementing a general union, as shown in their several resolves, — "that one heart animated the whole," — "one masterly soul animating one vigorous body." He and others of that day knew that this extraordinary system was of universal application, and intended as such by its

¹ Bancroft, V. 200.

originator. Hutchinson's letters abundantly prove the fact, even without the unmistakable evidence found in the acts and writings of Samuel Adams. The Governor, in his History, says that the original plan was to obtain the sanction of the Assembly to the movement, when "the whole proceedings should be transmitted to the several Assemblies upon the continent, for their approbation and concurrence." This was admitted to him by Cushing, the Speaker of the House, and was probably well understood among the friends of the government.¹

Samuel Adams himself repeatedly points to the intercolonial movement as the immediate result of the Massachusetts confederacy, which he had the satisfaction of knowing had been cordially approved by "gentlemen of figure in other Colonies." He adds: "From the manifest discovery of a union of sentiment in this Province, which has been one happy fruit of it [the town meeting], there will be the united efforts of *the whole*, in all constitutional and proper methods, to prevent the entire ruin of our liberties." In a letter to Arthur Lee, he refers to the Boston Committee as the first step towards "awakening the whole continent," and as the origin of the intercolonial committee in the Virginia House of Burgesses. Indeed, several days before the town meeting at which he proposed his plan, looking forward to its results, he expressed a hope to Gerry that it might "arouse the whole continent."

The evidence, both direct and inferential, of the ultimate intention of Adams is irresistible. Hutchinson, writing on the subject a few months afterwards to a gentleman in England, says:—

"The several towns having made their resolves, there would be but little difficulty in bringing their Representatives to agree to this in the House; and this being done, the other Assemblies throughout the continent were to be desired by a circular letter to join with the House of Massachusetts Bay."²

¹ Hutchinson, History, III. 368, 369.

² Hutchinson to some person unknown, Feb. 19, 1773.

And immediately after, he says of Samuel Adams to another correspondent:—

“Our principal incendiary has a great deal of low art and cunning, and laid his plan to concert measures for maintaining the independency. The Assembly was to follow the example of the towns, and invite every other Assembly upon the continent to make the same declarations.”¹

And again:—

“The restless incendiary laid a new scheme to promote his professed independence. . . . I have stopped the progress of the towns for the present, and I think have stopped the progress of another part of the scheme, which was for this Assembly to invite every other Assembly upon the continent to assert the same principles.”²

Referring to an interview with Cushing, Hutchinson says in another letter:—

“Upon this occasion he confided to me the plan of the party to have sent their circular letter to every Assembly upon the continent, to join with them in denying the supremacy of Parliament, but pretended he was not let into it until the Assembly met, which I could not easily believe.”

Why this intention was delayed, when the Assembly met in January, 1773, is quite apparent. With the opening of the session, the Governor, to the surprise of everybody, introduced the subject himself, by commencing the famous discussion on Parliamentary authority, which continued without intermission until the 6th of March, when, with a long and able paper, he suddenly prorogued the Court. A week

¹ Hutchinson to Israel Mauduit, Feb. 21, 1773. That the Virginia resolves in March, 1773, for intercolonial committees of correspondence, were a consequence of the Massachusetts local Committee seems to have been generally understood at that time. “The first notice,” says Hutchinson, “which appears of the resolves of the town of Boston was by the Assembly of Virginia, and that very soon after they had passed. They seem to have produced a set of resolves,” etc. Hutchinson’s History, III. 392 (see also the note).

² Hutchinson to Gen. Mackay, Feb. 23, 1773.

afterwards, the Virginia House of Burgesses formed their intercolonial committee of correspondence, to which the Massachusetts House responded, on the motion of Samuel Adams, as soon as the Assembly convened in May.

An instance of the great reliance which was placed in the judgment and opinions of Samuel Adams is found in a correspondence which this winter passed between him and a number of the leading gentlemen of Providence, Rhode Island. Early in the year, the Commissioners of Customs in Boston had despatched the armed schooner *Gaspee*, under command of Lieutenant Dudingston, to Narraganset Bay, to prevent infractions of the revenue laws and put a stop to illicit trade. Upon this, Governor Wanton of Rhode Island sent the high sheriff to Dudingston, requiring him to show his commission. The officer did not reply, but communicated the circumstance to Rear Admiral Montagu at Boston, who wrote an insulting reply to the Rhode Island Governor, denying his right to interfere in orders that the Admiral might give to the officers of his squadron. In June, the Providence packet was chased by the *Gaspee*, which, venturing too far in shore, ran aground on Namquit Point, and was there attacked by a party of armed men from Providence, who boarded her in a number of boats, set fire to the vessel, and destroyed her without loss of life. The attempts both of Governor Wanton and Admiral Montagu to discover the perpetrators were unsuccessful; and in January, 1773, a Board of Commissioners, appointed by the Crown, convened at Providence to take the matter into consideration. In December, the news had arrived that, by royal order, the abettors and witnesses were to be taken to England for condign punishment. The deed had been one of impulse, and was the act of a few unknown persons; yet this intolerable violation of justice was fully resolved upon, and it was even proposed to abrogate the charter of Rhode Island; and Hutchinson thought that "a few punished at Execution Dock would be the only effect-

ual preventive of any further attempt." The act relating to the King's dock-yards, passed in the last session of Parliament, and especially referred to by Adams in the Rights of the Colonists, provided for just such punishment; for, by its provisions, it was death to destroy the oar of a cutter's boat, or the head of an empty cask belonging to the fleet, and the accused could be transported to England for trial. Lord Dartmouth had written to Governor Wanton, stating the King's order as to the abettors and witnesses, and the principal men of the Province, looking around them in their hour of peril, resolved to write to Samuel Adams for direction.

"We doubt not," they say, "you have before this heard of the difficulties this Colony labors under, on account of the destruction of the Gaspee, they being such as becomes the attention of the Colonies in general (though immediately to be executed on this only). As they affect in the tenderest point the liberties, lives, and properties of all America, we are induced to address you upon the occasion, whom we consider as a principal in the assertion and defence of those rightful and natural blessings; and in order to give you the most authentic intelligence into these matters, we shall recite the most material paragraphs of a letter from the Earl of Dartmouth to the Governor of this Province, dated Whitehall, Sept. 4th, 1772." [Then follows the extract from the Secretary's letter.¹] "You will consider how natural it is for those who are oppressed, and in the greatest danger of being totally crushed, to look around every way for assistance and advice. This has occasioned the present troubles we give you. We therefore ask that you would seriously consider of this whole matter, and consult such of your friends and acquaintance as you may think fit upon it, and give us your opinion in what manner this Colony had best behave in this critical situation, and how the shock that is coming upon us may be best evaded or sustained. We beg you, answer as soon as may be, especially before the 11th of January, the time of the sitting of the General Assembly."

¹ Mr. Adams published this letter in the Boston papers. See his letter to R. H. Lee, April 10, 1773.

This letter, signed among others by Darius Sessions, the Deputy-Governor of Rhode Island, and Stephen Hopkins, who had lately filled the executive office, and was in a few years to affix his name to the Declaration of Independence, speaks volumes for the wide-spread influence of the patriot whose counsel was solicited. Did no other memorials exist, this appeal alone would indicate a controlling mind to which others were accustomed to look for guidance in public exigencies. His advice, in this instance, was contained in a number of letters, from which a few extracts may be taken. The first was to Darius Sessions.

“The subject,” he says, “is weighty, and requires more of my attention than a few hours to give you my digested sentiments of it. Neither have I yet had an opportunity of advising with the few among my acquaintance whom I would choose to consult upon a matter which, in my opinion, may involve the fate of America. This I intend soon to do, and shall then, I hope, be able to communicate to you (before the time you have set shall expire) such thoughts as in your judgment may perhaps be wise and salutary on so pressing an occasion. . . . The interested servants of the Crown, and some of them pensioned, perhaps biassed and corrupted, being the constituted judges whether this or that subject shall be put to answer for a supposed offence against the Crown, — and that, in a distant country, to their great detriment and danger of life and fortune, even if their innocence should be made to appear, — what man is safe from the malicious persecutions of such persons, unless it be the cringing sycophant; and even he holds his life and property at their mercy. It should awaken the American Colonies, which have been too long dozing upon the brink of ruin. It should again unite them in one band. Had that union which once happily subsisted been preserved, the conspirators against our common rights would never have ventured such bold attempts. It has ever been my opinion that an attack upon the liberties of one Colony is an attack upon the liberties of all; and, therefore, in this instance, all should be ready to yield assistance to Rhode Island.”

On the last day of the same week he wrote again to Sessions a long and admirably clear and prudent letter of ad-

vice, in which, after sketching a general plan of procedure for Rhode Island, he says : —

“If the foregoing hypotheses are well grounded, I think it may justly be considered that, since the Constitution is already destined to suffer unavoidable dissolution, an open and manly determination of the Assembly not to consent to its ruin would show to the world and posterity that the people were virtuous, though unfortunate, and sustained the shock with dignity.

“You will allow me to observe that this is a matter in which the whole American continent is deeply concerned, and a submission of the Colony of Rhode Island to this enormous claim of power would be made a precedent for all the rest. They ought, indeed, to consider deeply their interest in the struggle of a single Colony, and their duty to afford her all practicable aid. This last is a consideration which I shall not fail to mention to my particular friends when our Assembly shall sit the next week.

“Should it be the determination of a weak administration to push this measure to the utmost at all events, and the Commissioners call in the aid of troops for that purpose, it would be impossible for me to say what might be the consequences, — perhaps a most violent political earthquake through the whole British empire, if not its total destruction.

“I have long feared this unhappy contest between Great Britain and America would end in rivers of blood; should that be the case, America, I think, may wash her hands in innocence; yet it is the highest prudence to prevent, if possible, so dreadful a calamity. Some such provocation as is now offered to Rhode Island will, in all probability, be the immediate occasion of it. Let us, therefore, consider whether, in the present case, the shock that is coming upon you may not be evaded, which is a distinct part of the question proposed. . . . I beg first to propose for your consideration, whether a circular letter from your Assembly, on the occasion, to those of the other Colonies, might not tend to the advantage¹ of the general cause and of Rhode Island in particular. I should think it would induce each of them at least to enjoin their agents in Great Britain to represent the severity of your case in the strongest terms.”²

¹ This advice was followed early in the next year.

² Samuel Adams to Darius Sessions, Dec. 28, 1772, and Jan. 2, 1773.

As the time for the meeting of the Rhode Island Legislature drew near, Mr. Adams wrote again to Sessions with the view of dissuading Governor Wanton from acting with the royal commission, on which he had been placed by the government. He feared that it would be construed as conceding on the part of the Governor to the legality of the commission, which Adams denied.

“Every movement,” said he, “on the side of the Commissioners and the Assembly may be important. I think no concessions will be made on your part which shall have the remotest tendency to fix a precedent; for, if it is once established, a thousand Commissioners of the like arbitrary kind may be introduced to the ruin of your free Constitution.”

The correspondence was continued until the middle of February, the same persons keeping Adams informed of the movements of the Assembly and the Commission.¹

The house in Purchase Street, where Adams was born, was standing early in the present century, but at last disappeared before the march of improvement. It was the family homestead, and there his children were born. Although his humble circumstances precluded anything like display, the house was frequently the rendezvous of his political friends, and especially of the club, which seems to have met at the residences of the members. The entertainment of visitors, however, thanks to the care of his devoted wife, was not wanting in substantial hospitality. Mrs. Adams was said to be one of the best housekeepers in Boston, where all the matrons prided themselves upon the art most honorable to woman; and her prudence and good management permitted nothing like penury or meanness to appear. She fully appreciated the character of her husband. Besides feeling it her duty to aid, by all means in her power, in the great objects of his life by disburdening him as much as possible of domestic

¹ See also the letter of Adams, on this subject, to Richard Henry Lee, April 10, 1773.

cares, she was perfectly devoted to him socially. His letters to his wife and daughter, while he was in Congress at Philadelphia, during the Revolution, are expressive of the tenderest solicitude for their happiness and comfort, and reveal a degree of elegant and refined sentiment in his intercourse with them, peculiar to the educated gentleman of that day. He lived within the slender means which his stipend from the Assembly afforded him; yet he was cheerful and contented with his lot, and desired, as a reward for his public services, only a decent livelihood for his family, satisfied if the important part he was acting should aid in preserving to his countrymen their liberties and virtue. Grace was always said by Samuel Adams in person, and the little circle each night listened to the divine word as read by some member of the family from the great Bible. He has been represented as an austere, strait-laced, Puritanical man, suffering no levity nor amusements in his household. This is incorrect. No one in the religious society of Boston had a greater reverence for the Sabbath and the requirements of the rigid faith of his pious ancestors, nor were any more careful in the observance of them. He was a devout Christian, a sincerely religious man; but was far from being gloomy or morose, however stern and unrelenting he was in political life. Nothing pleased him more than the cheerful sports of children, and the society of young persons was specially acceptable to him. He ever had pleasant words for them, loved to have them visit at his house, sympathized in their sorrows and pleasures, and was always ready with kind advice for their welfare. He was one of those benignant characters whom children approach with confidence and love.¹

¹ His own recreations were few. As he was eminently social in his habits, the rare intervals of relaxation from public cares were generally passed among intimate friends, sometimes riding into the country, or joining a summer excursion down the Bay to test the sailing qualities of one of Hancock's newly-launched vessels, or with a committee of the Legislature to visit Harvard College or the lighthouse. John Adams occasionally alludes to these in his Diary, once in particular in August, 1770, when the writer seems to have been

His own children, whose education he superintended during their youth, remembered him as their companion as well as parent, and they sought his counsel with the assurance that he would have the most affectionate interest in all that concerned them. At the period of which we are now treating, his daughter Hannah was seventeen years old, and his son, named after himself, just twenty-two. Mr. Adams sent his son at the age of fourteen to Harvard College, where he was graduated in 1770; and in the following year, his father designing him for the medical profession, his friend Dr. Joseph Warren, who was the family physician, took him under his charge, educated him professionally, and in 1773 he commenced to practise medicine in his native town. He afterwards became a surgeon in the army of the Revolution, served until the end of the war, and died of disease caused by exposure and hardship. Until the commencement of hostilities he continued to live in his father's house, where his pleasing social disposition made him a valuable member in the family circle. They often had for visitors the sister of Samuel Adams (Mrs. James Allen, whom her brother called "Polly") and her three children, who usually came from a neighboring town, and passed a certain season in Boston; Mrs. and Miss Adams returning the visit during the summer months.¹ Their principal social visitors appear to

invited to join such an excursion. He describes a jaunt over sharp rocks to the point of the island opposite to Nantasket, and speaks of their visit to a hideous cavern, containing marine curiosities, which they entered and explored, guided by "Mr. Mason," probably the lighthouse keeper.

¹ In the will of Mrs. Adams, dated December 15, 1808, occurs, among other bequests, the following: "To Joseph Allen, Esq., and Samuel Allen, both of Worcester, and to Mrs. Avery, wife of the Rev. Joseph Avery of Holden, ten dollars each, for a ring of Mr. Adams's and my hair." The three persons here designated were the children of James Allen and Mary Adams, sister of Samuel Adams. The daughter (also named Mary) became the wife of Mr. Avery, as above shown, who was a minister in Holden for more than half a century. Joseph, elsewhere mentioned as a special favorite of his uncle, was the father of the Rev. George Allen and Judge Charles Allen, both of Worcester. Samuel married Miss Elizabeth Honeywood, a sister of St. John

have been the families of Francis Wells, Esq., of "Cambridge Farm," and of the Rev. Samuel Checkley, — Mr. Adams having been related to both by his first and second marriage. A son of this minister, bearing the same name, was pastor of the Old North Church from 1747 to 1768, and a friendly intimacy existed for many years between the families. The younger Checkley and his brother William, who married a Miss Cranston in 1766, were often at the house, and some amusing anecdotes are related of the lively and entertaining disposition of the latter. It may be taken as a proof of the endurance and longevity of the people of the last century that it was the office of the elder minister Checkley to baptize Samuel Adams on the day of his birth in 1722; to perform the service in 1749 at the marriage of his own daughter Elizabeth to the same person; to baptize all their children; to officiate at the funeral of this daughter in 1757; and again, in 1764, at the marriage ceremony of Samuel Adams and Elizabeth Wells. He died in the winter of 1769, having preached fifty-one years in the church in Summer Street. Miss Elizabeth Wells, above mentioned, was twenty-one years older than her brother Thomas, who, in the last year of the Revolution, was married to the daughter of Samuel Adams, — the young lady thus becoming the wife of her step-mother's brother, eighteen years after her father's marriage into the same family.

The black servant girl, Surry, was presented to Mrs. Adams by Mrs. Checkley about the year 1765, and, having been freed by Mr. Adams, lived with the family for nearly half a

Honeywood of Leicester, Mass., a well-known poet. After her death he married Miss Rachel Newell, daughter of General Newell, an officer of the Revolutionary war. Mrs. Mary White, a daughter of Joseph and Mary Avery above mentioned, is now living at an advanced age in Boylston, Mass. Among many interesting relics of the Adams family, in this lady's possession, is a set of antique bed-curtains of rich material and elaborately worked. Into the fabric is sewn with silk thread the following inscription: "Wrought by Mary Fifield of Boston, Mass., about the year 1714, assisted by her daughter Mary, mother of the late Samuel Adams, Governor of Massachusetts."

century. Surry never left Boston but twice, which was during the British occupation, and when the small-pox prevailed in town during the administration of Governor Adams. She served every member of the household with an affectionate devotion, which nothing could change. When the institution of slavery was formally abolished in Massachusetts, though she had long been free, additional papers were made out for her: but she threw them into the fire, indignantly remarking that she had lived too long to be trifled with in that manner. Another member of the family was a servant boy, whose education Mr. Adams attended to as conscientiously as though he had been his own child. The boy lived to become an influential mechanic in Boston, and was conspicuous in 1795-96 as an active politician in electing his old master to the Chief Magistracy of the Commonwealth. Add to these a famous Newfoundland dog, named "Queue," a creature of immense strength and almost human intelligence, and we have the little household as it existed just previous to the Revolution. "Queue" was noted for his antipathy to British uniforms; and he bore on his shaggy hide the scars of wounds received from soldiers, and even officers, who repelled his attacks by cutting and shooting at him. But the dog seemed to bear a charmed life.

The grounds of the family estate left in 1748 by the elder Adams appear to have diminished in extent, by sale or other means, until the commencement of the Revolution. Besides the dwelling-house, there were several outbuildings; among them an old and disused malt-house and a garden containing a number of fruit-trees and elms. The boundary extended two hundred and fifty-eight feet on Purchase Street; the estate including the garden and a wharf, dock, and flats reaching down to low-water mark. The garden was the special pride of Miss Adams, who was an early riser and an enthusiastic lover of nature. On one of the stone steps, leading to the front door, were cut the letters "S. A." and "M. F.," the initials of the elder Adams and his wife. This was

said to have been done in 1713, the year of their marriage, when the house was built. The letters were visible nearly a century afterwards, but almost obliterated by constant wear. Of the interior arrangement of the dwelling, little can be ascertained. John Adams, at the close of the year 1772, made this entry in his Diary:—

“Spent this evening with Mr. Samuel Adams at his house. Had much conversation about the state of affairs,—Cushing, Phillips, Hancock, Hawley, Gerry, Hutchinson, Sewall, Quincy, &c. Adams was more cool, genteel, and agreeable than common; concealed and restrained his passions, &c. He affects to despise riches, and not to dread poverty; but no man is more ambitious of entertaining his friends handsomely, or of making a decent and elegant appearance than he. He has lately new covered and glazed his house, and painted it very neatly, and has new papered, painted, and furnished his rooms; so that you visit at a very genteel house, and are very politely received and entertained.

“Mr. Adams corresponds with Hawley, Gerry, and others. He corresponds in England and in several of the other Provinces. His time is all employed in the public service.”¹

In the same Diary, for several years, we now and then find Samuel Adams visiting his political friends, or receiving them at his own house, where the questions of the day were discussed, and probably some of the most important measures matured. Towards the last of December in this year, he called on John Adams to request him to officiate as orator at the succeeding anniversary of the Boston Massacre.

“This afternoon,” says John Adams, “I had a visit from Samuel Pemberton, Esquire, and Mr. Samuel Adams. Mr. P. said they were a sub-committee deputed by the standing committee of the town of Boston, to request that I would deliver an oration in public upon the ensuing 5th of March. He said that they two were desirous of

¹ John Adams's Diary, Dec. 30, 1772 (Works, II. 308). It was towards the close of 1772 that the Society of the Bill of Rights in London elected Samuel Adams a member. See Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, Jan. 25, 1773 (Life of A. Lee, I. 226–228).

it, and that the whole committee was unanimously desirous of it. I told them that the feeble state of my health rendered me quite willing to devote myself forever to private life; that, far from taking any part in public, I was desirous to avoid even thinking upon public affairs; and that I was determined to pursue that course, and therefore that I must beg to be excused. They desired to know my reasons. I told them so many irresistible syllogisms rushed into my mind and concluded decisively against it, that I did not know which to mention first; but I thought the reason that had hitherto actuated the town was enough, namely, the part I took in the trial of the soldiers. Though the subject of the oration was quite compatible with the verdict of the jury in that case, and indeed, even with the absolute innocence of the soldiers, yet I found the world in general were not capable, or not willing, to make the distinction, and, therefore, by making an oration upon this occasion, I should only expose myself to the lash of ignorant and malicious tongues on both sides of the question. Besides that, I was too old to make declamations. The gentlemen desired I would take time to consider of it. I told them no; that would expose me to more difficulties; I wanted no time; it was not a thing unthought of by me, though this invitation was unexpected; that I was clearly, fully, absolutely, and unalterably determined against it, and, therefore, that time and thinking would answer no end. The gentlemen then desired that I would keep this a secret, and departed.”¹

¹ John Adams's Diary, Dec. 29, 1772.

CHAPTER XXV.

Progress of the Committees of Correspondence.—Hutchinson, alarmed at the continued Denial of Parliamentary Supremacy, assembles the General Court, resolved to test the Question in a Controversy.—His Opening Speech on that Subject.—Its Doctrines apparently unanswerable.—Adams Chairman of the Committee to reply.—His signal Overthrow of Hutchinson.—Chagrin of his Excellency.—He responds, and Adams again replies for the Assembly.—Parliamentary Authority over the Colonies disproved.—A Continental Congress suggested.—Effect of these Papers in England and America.

WHEN the success of the Committees of Correspondence was such as to thoroughly alarm the government, more than eighty towns having been brought into the agreement, the Governor deemed it prudent to call the Assembly together, with the view, if possible, of preventing further mischief. Circulars had been sent "to about two hundred and fifty towns and districts with town privileges." Most of the principal ones had followed the example of Boston, and, says Hutchinson, "more than one third of the whole number had joined the confederacy before my Assembly met";¹ and again, to Bernard he says, after naming Samuel Adams as the author of this plan to set the Province in a blaze, "I question whether ten towns in the Province would have stood out, if I had not called upon the two Houses just as I did."² His hope in assembling the Legislature was, that some of the towns would consider it unnecessary to form committees, since their Representatives were to meet so soon. Mr. Adams also believed that the meeting of the General Court had been hastened by the committees. "It is my opinion," he says, "that it would have been post-

¹ Hutchinson to Gen. Mackay, Feb. 23, 1773.

² Hutchinson to Bernard, Feb. 23, 1773.

poned as usual, of late, till near the close of our political year, had it not been for the Boston town meeting." ¹

The Governor had doubtless availed himself of all the legal knowledge within his reach, for the preparation of the address with which he intended to open the session. This speech was suggested by the extraordinary success of "the declarations against the authority of Parliament," as he termed Adams's "Rights of the Colonists," which were likely "to raise a general flame." Hence, as soon as the pamphlet was circulated, he began to consider the subjects of which it treated. His legal acquirements were counted equal, if not superior, to those of any other lawyer in the Province, and he had also at his command the learning of not a few men of acknowledged ability. The crown writers, who had already disputed the subject of Parliamentary supremacy with Samuel Adams, were generally lawyers in the royal service, one of them Jonathan Sewall,² the Attorney-General. These men the Governor could consult at any time, and probably had the benefit of their suggestions. But his own qualifications for such a contest as ensued at the approaching session were very great. His learning and talents were unquestioned; he was an experienced politician; and having a thorough knowledge of English and Colonial history, he entered upon the controversy with every assurance of success. He therefore looked forward with satisfaction to the opening of the Court, when he should enhance his reputation in England by a stroke such as he believed would confound all opposition. With leisure to mature his cunningly devised project, he believed that the time had come when he could "make apparent the reasonableness of coercion, and justify it to all the world." ³

¹ Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, April 9, 1773.

² Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections, Fourth Series, IV. 458; Note by Thomas Hollis.

³ Hutchinson to J. Pownall, January, 1773. The letter was written immediately after the delivery of his speech to the Legislature, and with the self-

It would seem that the whole aim of the man was to find plausible excuses for the destruction of his country and its liberties, so as to advance his own interests. His plan was to drive the Legislature into an open avowal of the independence of the Colonies, or oblige them to admit the force of his reasoning on the authority of Parliament. In either case, he pictured for himself a complete triumph: by the one he should place the patriots in the wrong, by the other his reputation as a lawyer and statesman would be established. But little did he anticipate the snare he had laid for himself, or his quick succeeding defeat.

On the 6th of January the Legislature convened, and his Excellency, on the same day, hastened to send down his speech, which was directed to both Houses. It is here only necessary to condense the arguments, as illustrating the positions taken on each side.

Confident of victory, he at once threw down the gauntlet, promising to treat the subject without reserve, hoping the Legislature would receive what he had to say with candor. And if they should not agree with him, he promised to consider with candor what they might offer in answer. Then, having reviewed the usages of the last hundred years, to show that it was the sense of their ancestors, as well as of the kingdom, that the Colonists, from the time their predecessors first took possession, were to remain under the supreme authority of Parliament, which he held had never before been called in question, he turns to the late proceedings of several towns which had adopted the "Rights of the Colonists," denying the supreme authority of Parliament. The provisions of the charter, he said, could not be understood as an exemption from acts of Parliament, although the Colonists were not represented in that body; but the grant of liberties and immunities therein specified was nothing more than an assurance on the part of the Crown that those

sufficiency of one who believed his argument to be conclusive and unanswerable.

born in the Colonies or on their passage thither or thence would not become aliens, but were entitled to the liberties of free-born subjects, in whatever part of the English dominions they might happen to be. The rights of Englishmen could not be the same in all respects in all parts of the British dominions. At home they were governed by laws made by persons in whose election they had from time to time a choice. If they removed to America, where the right of voting for those persons could not be exercised, it did not follow that the government, by their removal, lost its authority over them; but rather that, by their voluntary removal, they relinquished a right which they could resume whenever they returned to England. He knew of no line that could be drawn between the supreme authority of Parliament and the total independence of the Colonies; it was impossible there should be two independent Legislatures in one and the same state. Independent of England, the Colonies could not claim her protection, and might thus become a prey to one or the other powers of Europe; and he asked if there was anything they had more reason to dread than independence. Assuming, then, that the supremacy of Parliament would no longer be denied, he believed it would follow that the exercise of its authority could be no matter of grievance; and if it were, that could be no ground for immediately denying or renouncing the authority, or refusing to submit to it.

The crafty Justice Brabazon, when seeking for pretexts and plausible grounds, in the reign of Edward the First, upon which to erect the royal prerogative over the domain of Scotland, did not search through the obsolete records with more pertinacity than did Hutchinson, as he now labored to establish the almost feudal subjection of his countrymen to the same power. The precedents which he had gathered with much care he made the basis of an extended essay, prepared with consummate skill, illustrating the subject with all the powers of his reasoning and knowledge of history. They were advanced with an air of candor which no

one better than the Governor knew how to assume. "If I am wrong in my principles of government," said he, "or in the inferences which I have drawn from them, I wish to be convinced of my error. . . . I have laid before you what I think are the principles of your Constitution; if you do not agree with me, I wish to know your objections." Thus he challenged them to debate on the most important subject that had ever come before an American Legislature. For more than a century, the Colonies had lived in cheerful acknowledgment of Parliamentary rule, regarding that body as their natural protector. By the attempt of Grenville, in 1764, to extort an unjust revenue from them, the veil of peaceful contentment was torn rudely aside, and, as the popular liberties were asserted, the boundaries of that supremacy began to be more clearly defined; and now the great question was about to be contested.

The document created all the sensation in the country that its author had anticipated, and he triumphantly awaited its effect upon the Assembly. It immediately appeared in all the Boston newspapers, and found its way throughout the Province, where it was perused by the farmers in the long winter evenings, and was discussed in the political clubs. It was printed in England, was copied into the papers of other Colonies, and everywhere read as a powerful and convincing argument. All looked with anxiety for the answer of the House. Many who had never clearly understood the closer points of the issues upon which the speech was based, or whose limited knowledge of them had caused an implicit and habitual reliance upon the ability of their leaders, considered it incontrovertible. Hutchinson soon after wrote to Lord Dartmouth and others in England that "it was the general voice in both Houses of the Assembly, that the principles he had advanced were not to be denied." But, by those who had pondered over these questions, it was perceived that the Governor had laid himself open to attack. His hearers in Boston saw his indiscretion, and

Samuel Adams prepared "to take the fowler in his own snare." The positions appeared at first to be so impregnable, that some members of the House were doubtful of the policy of risking a defeat by replying. Samuel Adams had anxiously awaited a favorable moment to contest this very question in the Legislature, and the opportunity now presented itself. In a circular from the Committee of Correspondence of the Assembly to the like bodies in other Colonies, he alludes to the state of feeling existing at this time in the House.

"Our Governor in a manner forced the Assembly freely to express their sentiments in so delicate a point as to appear to acquiesce in the doctrines he advanced in his speech. The House of Representatives were reduced to a choice of difficulties, either by speaking their minds, to run the hazard of giving a wrong touch to the ark, or, on the other hand, to suffer it to fall for want of their feeble support in a time of danger. The total silence of the sister Colonies put it out of our power to avail ourselves of such aid as we should undoubtedly have had from their arguments, or even of knowing their sentiments on an all-concerning point. It will therefore appear to our brethren of the other Colonies to have been not very easy for us to determine whether it was a time to speak or a time to keep silence. We, upon the whole, thought it prudent to enter into the subject, but with caution, rather supporting the opinions of our ancestors, which appeared to us to be opposite to the sentiments of the Governor, and deducing inferences therefrom, than explicitly declaring our own. In what manner the House have acquitted themselves is a matter in which we can more safely rely upon the free and candid judgment of our neighbors than our own."

The Governor's speech was read to the House for the second time on the 8th, when a committee was appointed to reply; and on the 22d the answer was reported by Samuel Adams, its author and the chairman of the committee. As there was not a full House, the subject was postponed until the afternoon, and an effort was meantime made to obtain a general attendance. The answer was then read, and named

as the special order for the 26th, at eleven o'clock. The members were evidently in a quandary. Very few of that body were men of more than ordinary acquirements. Their occupations, and the seclusion of many of them for long periods from the immediate theatre of action, gave them, for the most part, few opportunities to unweave the more subtle political questions, though all understood the general issues, and were not to be deceived, especially when guided by the Boston members. This is shown particularly by the selection of the committees for drafting important papers and the writers of the documents out of those committees. The journals of the House indicate that this work was usually confided to a few practised men. Hutchinson says in a letter written during this session:—

“I think, besides, it was high time the principles of the leaders here should be known in England. I say leaders, because I suppose of about—in the House of Representatives, who voted unanimously the answer to my speech, not ten could give any account of what they had done.”¹ And to another: “I don't remember before a House of Representatives voting unanimously according to the direction of their leaders; and yet this seems to have been the case with the late House, for I could not find any of them who could give any account of the messages after they had voted them.”²

This stricture upon the intelligence of the House, though probably exaggerated, would apply to very many. It is recorded in the journals, that the reading was “by paragraphs,” that the full application and meaning of the paper might be understood, and a manuscript record of the proceedings taken on that day shows that some evidently doubted the validity of the authorities cited, so unprecedented were the positions assumed; and the committee were requested to bring vouchers to substantiate their arguments on the day appointed for the next consideration of the answer.

¹ Hutchinson to Israel Mauduit, Feb. 21, 1773.

² Hutchinson to Col. Williams, April 7, 1773.

On the 26th, the members having been specially directed to attend for the occasion, the answer was again considered, and the vouchers were probably produced. The question was postponed until the afternoon, when the report was "accepted unanimously by ninety-seven voters." As the House were appointing a committee to carry it up, an addition was submitted and referred to the committee, when a motion to adjourn until nine on the following day was made and lost. These were probably efforts of Tory members to delay the answer or hamper its adoption; but it passed, and before the adjournment Samuel Adams himself, after it had been two days debated, presented it to his Excellency.¹

¹ Samuel Adams's authorship of this celebrated state paper, and that of March on the same subject, has been questioned. Of the first one, either Samuel Adams or Joseph Hawley (who was also a member of the committee) was undoubtedly the author, and either would have availed himself of the suggestions of the other. The two were almost always placed upon committees together, to prepare important papers, and no document such as that now under consideration went forth until both had carefully considered it. Adams was usually the writer, as the many rough drafts in his autograph indicate, and as Hutchinson testifies in his History; and when great legal points were involved, he summoned all able counsel in aid of his positions. John Adams, though not a member of the Legislature, was in this instance consulted, as is shown by his reminiscence of the event and by Hutchinson's contemporary letters and his History. By reference to the journals of the House, from the day on which the committee was appointed to that on which the first answer was reported, it appears that while Hawley was upon several committees for general business, the usual demand was not made upon the time of Samuel Adams, who was left, it would seem, at liberty as chairman of the committee to prepare this paper; while the minutes of the proceedings of the House, during that interval, are in the handwriting of some person apparently assisting the clerk, or acting perhaps as his substitute. Can it, then, be doubted that Samuel Adams wrote this answer as well as that of March? Mr. Bancroft, after carefully weighing the evidence, was clearly satisfied of this (see his History, VI. 446, 448, 453); and no person of the present day is as well qualified as he to pronounce upon the subject, familiar as it is to him from many years of close study and impartial examination. The policy of Adams was to obtain for the cause all available talent; but the occasional legal authorities, which at his request may have been supplied by Hawley or John Adams, cannot warrant the omission of this paper from any collection of the writings of Samuel Adams.

It gives a signal refutation of the Governor's arguments. He is driven from every position with plain, irresistible reasoning, is condemned out of his own mouth, and the fallacy of his deductions is laid bare with unsparing sarcasm.

The circumstance of his not having been bred to the law has been advanced as a reason why a document possessing so many legal references is not likely to have been written by him. But an examination of the answer will show that it contains no evidence of a greater legal knowledge than a statesman should possess ; and several of the works from which quotations are given, and which serve as authorities, are those which Mr. Adams's previous essays and state papers prove that he must have studied. Franklin, Mason, Richard Henry Lee, Elbridge Gerry, and others equally eminent in the Revolution, were not educated as lawyers ; yet their general knowledge of so much of the law as could be obtained by reference to the ordinary authorities, in any constitutional argument, would scarcely be disputed. Samuel Adams was a deep reader of works on government and theology and whatever law books were accessible on the former subject. Bradford, the historian, who was personally acquainted with Adams, and was a witness of his career through the whole Revolutionary period, says of him, in his *Life of Mayhew* (p. 473) : " The very eminent patriot, Samuel Adams, is justly entitled to the character of a learned man as well as of an able political writer. He was also familiar with the works of the best theologians extant in his time. His powerful mind, however, displayed itself chiefly in political discussions, in his very able treatises in defence of republican governments and the rights of man." Sullivan, who was an associate with Samuel Adams through the entire Revolution, and knew him intimately, bears witness to his familiarity with the sentiments of the great English writers on popular rights and his full possession of all the governmental systems. Though Adams was not bred to the legal profession, his writings, private and public, are proofs that he was well read in the general principles of law applying to this controversy, and that he possessed great readiness in adapting them to his purposes. In the previous summer (June 5, 1772) he had been elected by joint ballot of both Houses, with John Adams and Samuel Pemberton, to revise the Province laws ; and it would appear, by the order of the names, that he received the largest number of votes, and was chairman of the committee. This selection from among so numerous a body would not have been made, but for the confidence reposed in his judgment and knowledge of the subject intrusted to him. The long and comprehensive letter of instructions from the House to Dr. Franklin, written by Samuel Adams in November, 1770 (see p. 370, and Bancroft, VI. 375), is conclusive evidence of his legal knowledge in affairs of Colonial government, — a knowledge which could consistently exist without any pretensions to " legal ability " in the common courts. The remarkable letter of the House to Dr. Franklin, from the pen of Samuel Adams in June, 1771 (see p. 460), maintains this identical principle of freedom from the authority of Parliament (see Bancroft,

Even his own History of Massachusetts is made an instrument of his overthrow. The paper obtained great celebrity in America, and was much admired in England by the friends of the Colonies for its soundness of doctrine and that

VI. 406); and the Governor, after denouncing Adams to the Ministry as its author, and "the greatest incendiary in the King's dominions," points to the letters as calculated to keep the Province in "a perpetual flame," by their dangerous and alarming denials of Parliamentary supremacy. Turn to whatever writings of Samuel Adams we will, for two or three years prior to this controversy, we find him preparing for these very questions, upon which his own mind had evidently been long made up from reading and reflection. To suppose that a statesman, whose time was wholly devoted to the one subject of the political relations between the Colonies and the parent country should not, in the course of years, have carefully fortified himself from the works of writers on government would be to doubt his claim to any portion of the industry and sagacity which were especial characteristics of Samuel Adams.

Many of his works not only evince a familiarity with the opinions of lawyers, but they repeatedly deny the authority of Parliament over the Colonies, — the very subject discussed in the answers under consideration. Among other political essays, those signed "Valerius Poplicola," October, 1771, and "Candidus," January, 1772, in the Boston Gazette, may be mentioned. They appeared respectively twelve and sixteen months before; and when compared with both of the answers in this controversy, will be found to run so nearly parallel in style and sentiment as to compel the conviction that they were the work of the same hand.

The attention of the Governor had been directed to this subject of Parliamentary supremacy many months before the date of the controversy, for he approaches it in the speech with which he prorogued the Assembly as far back as the last summer. (See Bradford's State Papers, p. 331.) He there controverts the claim made by the House to "legislative power and authority vested therein by the charter," and pointedly alludes to the late writings in the press, which gave "false notions of government," referring, as his own letters at the time declare, directly to Samuel Adams, whose published denials of Parliamentary authority, in his controversies with the crown writers, Hutchinson had previously denounced to administration. One of these papers (the Boston Gazette) he sent to England, and expressed the fear that its doctrines might even be adopted at the next session of the Legislature. The House did not meet until winter, when what he apprehended actually came to pass. Hutchinson's attention having been thus engaged, he had leisure to prepare his arguments; and however much the public may have been astonished at them, we have seen that the subject was no novelty to Samuel Adams, who had unquestionably been preparing for the occasion, which he saw was not far distant.

elegant simplicity of style which distinguishes the writings of Samuel Adams. It first traces the disturbed state of the government, to which the speech had alluded, to the new and unprecedented measures of Parliament. The Gov-

John Adams, at the time the above-mentioned essays were written, was not in public life. In fact, his own record in his Diary, only a week before the meeting of this Legislature, proves that he shunned all part in public business. Though urged by Samuel Adams to enter the lists, he steadily refused, and was "desirous to avoid even thinking of public affairs." (See his Diary, Dec. 9, 1772; Works, II. 307, 308.) With so little disposition, then, for political combat, it may be imagined that his aid in this instance could not have been very material. At a time when Samuel Adams was engaging in lengthy newspaper controversies with the government essayists on this special topic of Parliamentary supremacy, John Adams was exclusively devoting himself to the practice of his profession and the improvement of his property at Braintree, as is shown in his Diary. His attention being thus engrossed, he may not have known that his kinsman had been battling on this very subject for more than a year before; else he would scarcely have asserted, when endeavoring to recall these events from the oblivion of a past century, that he alone, when consulted, "introduced those legal and historical authorities which appear on the record." If we examine both answers, we shall find that these "historical authorities" are mainly from Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts. The very arguments with which the unlucky historian had apparently proved Parliamentary supremacy over the Colonies are turned into weapons for his own discomfiture. This is precisely the plan which Samuel Adams had already pursued in his public writings, some of which are especially devoted to the refutation of these particular points in Hutchinson's History. Is it not reasonable to suppose that now, when he came to treat the same subject in the Legislature, he would naturally turn to the volumes which he had been so closely criticising? As for "legal authorities," authors on government, which were certainly in Samuel Adams's library, are extensively used in both answers, and several had been equally quoted in his previous essays. He had evidently been a reader of Hooker, Locke, Grotius, Blackstone, Vattel, Hume, and American histories, as his writings through several years sufficiently prove; and it is not likely that he was a stranger to any of the standard political authors. Now the occasion had arrived, what was to prevent him from quoting and applying them as he had already done in the circumscribed limits of the public press?

Governor Bernard, as early as September, 1765, attempted to entrap the Legislature into committing themselves on the distinction between the authority of Parliament and the expediency of the Stamp Act (see Bancroft, V. 329), and Samuel Adams then replied, that there were boundaries to the power of Parliament, and that the people had certain inherent rights, which Parliament itself could not divest them of. (See I. 75-77, and Bancroft, V. 348.) The

ernor's assertions on Parliamentary supremacy are then taken up in detail, the answer promising, according to his Excellency's recommendation, "to treat the subject with calmness and candor, and also with a due regard to truth."

times were not then ripe for defining those powers. "It by no means," he says, "appertains to us to presume to adjust the boundaries of the power of Parliament; but boundaries there undoubtedly are." (See Bradford's State Papers, p. 45.)

To quote Bancroft again, referring to the present controversy (VI. 446): "No man in the Province had reflected so much as he [Samuel Adams] on the question of the legislative power of Parliament; no man had so early arrived at the total denial of that power. For nine years he had been seeking an opportunity of promulgating that denial as the opinion of the Assembly; and caution had always stood in his way. At last the opportunity had come, and the Assembly with one consent placed the pen in his hand."

The subject now at issue had been associated with his earliest public acts. Long before the Revolution, in Gov. Shirley's administration, he had appeared in defence of Colonial supremacy within Colonial limits against an act of Parliament overruling the laws of the Province; and that act of 1741, with the act of the Massachusetts Legislature passed at that time, militating with it, in relation to the Land Bank scheme, is one of the subjects of the second answer. (See I. 25-29.) Samuel Adams in this controversy uses the old Provincial act (which a contemporary says was passed through his exertions) as a precedent for disproving Parliamentary authority in the Colonies. For several years past, according to Hutchinson's History (III. 413), Adams had been industriously making such changes in the forms and phraseology of the legislative proceedings as were calculated gradually to undermine the existing idea of Parliamentary authority, and establish, as far as was practicable, the local independence of the Massachusetts Assembly. Controverting Parliamentary supremacy thus seems to have occupied him at every step of his political career.

But Samuel Adams, in a letter to John Adams, indirectly admits his authorship of both answers; for he refers to an assertion of the common law in the first, which he distinctly states was *his own*, and that, "as he thought," John Adams had been his authority on that particular point. Here, then, is an intimation from Samuel Adams himself, disclosing his authorship. It is reasonable to infer that the author of the first answer would have been especially selected by the committee to draft the second, the subject being the same; and that Samuel Adams was the author of the second will hardly be questioned, since he was manifestly alone engaged in composing it when the above-mentioned note (hereafter given) was written.

His original drafts have not been preserved; perhaps they were dispersed with the bulk of his papers after his decease. The manuscript copies on file in the public archives are in the handwriting of one who often acted

In a rehearsal of the provisions of the several charters of the American Colonies in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, it is argued at great length, and proved by the modes of expression, that the laws of the Colonies were intended to

as his amanuensis, and specimens of whose writing are found among his papers.

The note in Hutchinson's History (III. 374), given on the authority of a clergyman of Maryland, that Mr. Delaney or Mr. Dickinson were applied to by the committee to prepare an answer to his speech, is an absurd and unaccountable blunder. The journey to and from Annapolis had, at that time, to be made on horseback, which, even in a less inclement season than mid-winter, would have consumed more than the time that elapsed between the delivery of the Governor's speech and the 22d, the day on which the committee reported. A reply could not have been expected within a month at least, and his Excellency might have been pleased in the interim to dissolve the Assembly. Hutchinson's information was generally correct, and his historical statements reliable, save when violent personal prejudice, begot by disappointed avarice or ambition, pushed his resentment beyond his judgment. This story perhaps took its rise from the letter of Samuel Adams to John Dickinson (which the clergyman referred to may have seen), in relation to the late controversy, requesting him to take up his pen in defence of the ground assumed by the House. And here we have another indirect evidence of Samuel Adams's authorship. He shows an author's anxiety for the answers, and a desire to know the opinion of Southern gentlemen of the manner in which the House had acquitted themselves. Indeed, in that letter, instead of asking for aid in the controversy, he regrets "the silence of the other Assemblies upon every subject that concerns the joint interest of the Colonies." In the Circular Letter to the other Assemblies written in this year by Samuel Adams, alluding to this controversy, he says, "The total silence of the sister Colonies puts it out of our power to avail ourselves of such aid as we should undoubtedly have had from their arguments." These quotations, besides disclosing the author's paternal interest in the answers, effectually upset the theory of assistance received from any other Colony. The last paragraph in the first answer is also singularly in consonance with the wording of Adams's letter to Dickinson on this subject.

The first answer abounds with evidences of Samuel Adams's mind, too palpable to be mistaken. His very words and long-recognized sentiments are again and again repeated in it. The style of an author has its distinctive characteristics, which cannot be entirely disguised, even if desired. Those who, from long practice, have formed a certain style, gradually fall into the use of phrases which serve to identify their compositions among all others on the same subject. Expressions and the application of words peculiar to Samuel Adams, occur throughout this answer as well as that of the following month.

conform to the principles and fundamental laws of the English Constitution, its rights and statutes then in being, and by no means to bind the Colonies to the supreme authority of Parliament. When the continent was taken possession

Arthur Lee, in a letter to Samuel Adams (June 11, 1773), referring to this answer, says: "You have with great propriety maintained in your answer to the Governor's first speech, that the drawing a line being an arduous undertaking, and of general concernment, you would not attempt it without a general congress." Turning to the passage referred to by Mr. Lee,—the earliest recorded suggestion of a continental congress,—we are struck with the coincidence in sentiment and language with a letter from Adams to Lee, written fifteen months previously, in which he points out the advantages of a union of the Colonies, who should meet by their deputies once a year at some stated place. "It would be an arduous task," he continues, "for any man to undertake to awaken a sufficient number to so grand an undertaking. Nothing, however, is to be despaired of."

The last paragraph but two in the answer commences thus: "Your Excellency tells us, 'you know of no line that can be drawn between the Supreme authority of Parliament and the total independence of the Colonies.' If there be no such line, the consequence is either that the Colonies are the vassals of the Parliament or they are totally independent. As it cannot be supposed to have been the intention of the parties in the compact that we should be reduced to the state of vassalage, the conclusion is, that it was their sense that we are thus independent."

We have only to compare this with the following extracts from his previous writings, to see that they were by one person. In the essay, signed "Candidus," already alluded to, Mr. Adams had said: "It is certainly more concordant with the great law of nature and reason, which the most powerful nation may not violate, and cannot alter, that the Colonies are separate, independent states, and free, than to suppose that they must be one with Great Britain and slaves." And even eighteen months before, in the Boston Gazette of May 20, 1771, he says, as "An Elector of 1771," "Few words are necessary now to express my idea of our proper condition. We are either a state as entirely independent of Great Britain as any other on earth that makes use of her protection, or we are her *free* Colonies. In both these cases, her conduct towards us should be identical."

These are but a few of the instances running through the answers, where a careful examination will show precisely the same trains of thought and nearly the same words, disclosing to an impartial mind that the writer, on coming to handle the subject at a later period, had naturally reproduced his own ideas.

The Journals of the Legislature also reveal that Samuel Adams was chairman of the committees, both for drafting and for presenting the first answer to the Governor; his associates very properly making him the bearer of his own production.

of by Europeans, it was inhabited by heathen and barbarous people, who held all the right to the soil which God had originally given to man. The territory was thenceforth vested in, and was at the absolute disposal of, the Crown,

Nor should the fact be lost sight of, that the Governor's speech, which elicited the reply of the House, commenced with a direct attack upon the Committees of Correspondence, whose proceedings, as he himself admitted, had led him to attempt this argument in support of Parliamentary authority. The Committees of Correspondence were a political engine of which Samuel Adams was the inventor and master mind. "The Rights of the Colonists" (the original draft and preparatory notes of which still exist in the handwriting of Adams, written two months before the commencement of this controversy) embodied the very issues now raised in the Legislature. Hutchinson, by some means, had ascertained that Adams was the author of that new and bold doctrine, and so wrote to General Gage during this session. With this knowledge, the Governor based his two speeches upon the principles advanced in that work. He commences, in fact, with the declaration, that his argument is to be directed against the mischievous report which had caused so much commotion. "At length," says his Excellency, "the Constitution has been called in question, and the authority of Great Britain to make and establish laws for the inhabitants of this Province has been by many denied. What was at first whispered with caution was soon after openly asserted in print; and of late a number of the inhabitants in several of the principal towns in the Province have assembled together in their respective towns, and have assumed the name of legal town meetings, have passed resolves, which they have ordered to be placed upon their town records, to be printed and published. . . . In consequence of these resolves, committees of correspondence are formed in several of those towns to maintain the principles upon which they are formed." And near the commencement of his speech of Feb. 16th, he says again: "The proceedings of such of the inhabitants of the town of Boston as assembled together, and published their resolves or votes as the act of the town at a legal town meeting, denying in the most express terms the supremacy of Parliament, and inviting every other town and district in the Province to adopt the same principle, and to establish committees of correspondence to consult upon proper measures to maintain it, and the proceedings of divers other towns in consequence of this invitation, appeared to me to be so unwarrantable, and of such dangerous nature and tendency, that I thought myself bound to call upon you, in my speech at the opening of the session, to join with me in discountenancing and bearing a proper testimony against such irregularities and innovations." And, as if not content even with these explicit statements, he repeats the assertion at the close of the second speech, that "the point of the supremacy of Parliament" was the direct question raised in the last November by the Committees of Correspondence; and that this legislative controversy had been commenced by him to prevent the spread of such dan-

and not annexed to the realm. The granting of the charters to the Colonists implied no sovereignty in the Parliament, who had never had the inspection of Colonial acts,—the King giving his dissent or allowance.

gerous principles. The Governor's whole force, by his own admission, is directed against the platform established by the "Chief Incendiary." His own doctrines having been thus assailed, upon whom did the duty of maintaining them more appropriately devolve than upon Samuel Adams?

Another indication is found in the proceedings of the town immediately after the adjournment of this Legislature. (*Boston Gazette*, March 29, 1773.) The General Court rose on Saturday, the 6th of March. On Monday (the first legal day following), a town meeting was called (see Chap. XXVI.) for the purpose of publicly refuting the statements made by Hutchinson in his controversy with the late Assembly, wherein he had denied the legality of the Committees of Correspondence. Of the committee appointed for this purpose, Samuel Adams was chairman, and the report which was made on the 23d by him in person, he acknowledges to have been his own. His friends, aware of his agency in the recent legislative discussion, seem to have naturally confided this continuation of the subject to one who had so signally overthrown the Governor in the Assembly.

Hutchinson, in his first speech, charged that the Committee of Correspondence had "denied in the most express terms, the supremacy of Parliament." Adams, in the report above mentioned, replies in vindication of the town, that the House of Representatives had subsequently "made choice of this very mode of expression in their controversy with his Excellency." Turning back to the Town Records, we find the wording of the resolutions with which Adams preceded his motion for a committee of correspondence (Nov. 28, 1772), to be nearly similar to the opening of the answer to the Governor's second speech to the Assembly. Would any one have been so likely to have thus reproduced this language as the person who originally penned it?

It appears to have been understood by Arthur Lee, then in London, that Samuel Adams was the author of both answers in this controversy, — an impression he may have received direct by letter from other persons; for Adams, with characteristic disregard of any credit due to himself, never attempted to establish his own claim to acts or writings. Lee expresses himself in such a manner as to give his friend to know that he was well informed as to the authorship. He refers to them as the compositions of Samuel Adams, and applauds their ability in disproving Parliamentary supremacy. On sending the pamphlet containing the controversy to Arthur Lee, Adams directed his attention to marginal corrections, in his own hand, of errors of the press. Who but the author of the answers would have been thus careful to have his friend receive them in a perfect state, as he had originally submitted them to the Legislature?

Several of the contemporaries of Samuel Adams have left their testimony

The proposition that their ancestors, by removing to America, relinquished, until they might return, any of the rights of English subjects, they met by pointing to the King's express stipulation that their ancestors should enjoy all the

of his remarkable ability and industry as a controversial writer. Quotations from these have already been given (see Chap. XXI.) and the foregoing pages of extracts from his productions corroborate these statements. In fact, in that particular line he had no equal in America. Some years after the Revolution, when Adams had grown old and was neglected, if not forgotten in the partisan strifes which attended the national elections, one of his friends, who seems to have been by his side in the Massachusetts Legislature in former times, while the royal authority still existed, thus writes of the recognized leader:—

“So early as 1760 he distinguished himself for his opposition to Great Britain, and in the Cabinet took a very active part against the King's Governors, Bernard and Hutchinson. His pen was always conspicuous in those famous controversies between the General Assembly and those gentlemen; and with a few others, and but a few, to support him, he beat them from the field. As the opposition became more serious, his abilities and perseverance became more brilliant; and, in almost every important Assembly from that day to the present, he has been not only a member, but in it a man of attention and business. America, in her darkest periods, ever found him near the helm.”—Boston Independent Chronicle, December 11, 1788.

The man of whom this was written, it would seem, would be the very person to be selected to reply to the royal Governor in the instance now under consideration. See, too, the Life of Elbridge Gerry, I. 358, where the author alludes, as if by high authority, to state papers which were “the unclaimed productions of Samuel Adams's pen, while the honors of authorship had graced his more ambitious coadjutors.”

Hutchinson, very soon after the controversy, describing the circumstances of it to Lord Dartmouth, speaks of the two answers of the House, as “the assertions of a single leader”; and adds, in reply to his speech, that “the only resource of the leader was by cloudy and obscure answers to perplex the minds of the members.” The “single leader” thus pointed out was Samuel Adams, of whom the Governor afterwards wrote to the same nobleman, that he managed the town of Boston, and the General Assembly, just as he pleased; and of whom he has left on record that he was the composer of most of the state papers emanating from the House of Representatives. Friends and enemies alike designate him as the author.

As regards the second answer especially:—that Samuel Adams, while drafting this paper, consulted his friend, John Adams, on a legal point, is shown by the following note, to which allusion has already been made:—

rights of free and natural subjects, showing that they had never relinquished the right to be governed by laws made by persons in whose election they had a voice. His Excellency's manner of reasoning on this point seemed to them to render

DEAR SIR, —

If you have had leisure to commend your thoughts to writing, agreeable to my request, I shall be obliged if you will send them by the bearer. The Governor says the House have *incautiously* applied a rule of the common law (see the fourth coll. of his speech). The assertion is *mine*, upon *your* authority, as I thought. If it be vindicable, pray give me your aid in this as briefly as you please. I am sorry to trouble you at a time when I know you must be much engaged; but to tell you a secret, if there be a lawyer in the House in Major Hawley's absence, there is no one whom I incline to confide in.

Your Friend,

Monday evening.

S. ADAMS.

What may have been the aid which, in this instance, was returned by the bearer is unknown. The note, penned either in the evening of the 22d of February, or of March 1st (the day before the committee reported their answer), was probably sent by Samuel Adams from his house, where he was accustomed to do most of his writing. An examination of the answer, however, shows the point at which the writer had arrived when he sent to request John Adams's opinion in relation to the misinterpretation of common law there alluded to. The authorities and quotations from law books, appearing in the seventh and eighth paragraphs at that place, or the memoranda for them, may have been prepared by John Adams, and if so, were probably sent in response to his kinsman's note.

This note is especially valuable as a contemporary record by which Samuel Adams's authorship of *both answers* is sustained. For it not only shows that he was that evening alone, engaged in writing the *second* answer, but in it he plainly discloses that the *first* was also from his pen.

Two days after the second answer was reported in the House, John Adams made the first entry in his Diary for March. But though he refers to his late dispute with Brattle, and speaks of the great question agitated between the Governor and the General Court, any agency of his own in the affair had been so inconsiderable, that no mention is made of it, — a circumstance quite at variance with his usual custom of recording his own connection with important events. His time seems rather to have been occupied by his discussion with Brattle. "The two last months," January and February, he says, "have slid away. I have written a tedious examination of Brattle's absurdities. The Governor and General Court have been engaged, for two months, upon the greatest question ever yet agitated. I stand amazed at the Governor for forcing on this controversy." Surely this is the attitude rather of a spectator than a participant. There is not a word of his having aided in the late

the most valuable clauses of their charter unintelligible ; and they forebore, they said, to remark upon the absurdity of a grant, which, according to his construction, offered to persons born without the realm the same liberties which would have belonged to them if they had been born within the realm.

Having conclusively demonstrated, by lengthy argument and references, that it had never been the sense of the kingdom that the Colonies should remain subject to the supreme authority of Parliament, they proceed to show what was the sense of their ancestors. This is first done by quotations and comments from the Governor's History, whereby they prove that at the time the charter was granted, it was the opinion of persons of influence, that under certain circumstances, with the removal of subjects to any other state or quarter of the world, their subjection ceased, and this was the case of the original settlers of the Colony. Other authorities are copiously quoted to the same effect.

The Governor had said that he knew of no line between the authority of Parliament and total independence ; and the House replied that the consequence was, that the Colonies were the vassals of the Parliament, or totally independent ; and as it could not have been the intention of the parties in the compact to reduce themselves to a state of vassalage, the conclusion was that they were independent. "It is impossible," his speech had asserted, "that there should be two independent Legislatures in one and the same state." "May we not, then," was the reply, "further conclude that it was their sense that the Colonies were by their charters made different states by the mother country?" "Although," continued Hutchinson, "there may be but one head, the King, yet the two Legislative bodies will make two governments as

legislative contest, and after a few lines he goes back to his controversy with Brattle. The account appearing in his autobiography was given not far from half a century afterwards, when the aged narrator, then past his eightieth year, had evidently happened upon the above note, which is without date, and was in error as to the time when the controversy occurred.

distinct as the kingdoms of England and Scotland before the union." "Very true, may it please your Excellency," was the reply, "and if they interfere not with each other, what hinders but that, being united in one and common sovereign, they may live happily in that connection, and mutually support and protect each other?"

To the question whether there was anything which they had more reason to dread than independence, they answered, "Notwithstanding all the terrors which your Excellency has pictured to us, as the effects of a total independence, there is more reason to dread the consequence of absolute, uncontrolled power, whether of a nation or a monarch, than those of a total independence," and they referred him to the consent of all the other Colonies in Congress, if he wished to have the line drawn between the supreme authority of Parliament and total independence. "These," they held, "were great and profound questions."—"It is the grief of this House," they say, in closing, "that by the ill policy of a late injudicious administration, America has been driven into the contemplation of them. And we cannot but express our concern that your Excellency, by your speech, has reduced us to the unhappy alternative, either of appearing, by our silence, to acquiesce in your Excellency's sentiments, or of thus freely discussing this point."

The Governor's speech had been directed to both Houses, and the Council, replying by Bowdoin, argued ably for British rights, and contested the levying of taxes within the Province, but made no issue on the supremacy of Parliament. Hutchinson, and probably all his friends, were as much confounded by the answer of the House as the public had been at his own apparently irrefutable logic. He now began to regret his precipitate entrance into the dispute, but he could not retrace his steps: he had eagerly challenged the debate, and, much as he disliked it, was compelled to abide the issue. His letters are almost pitiful.

"I am involved," he writes to a correspondent in England, "in

spite of my teeth, in another controversy with my two Houses. I have always avoided the point of the superiority of Parliamentary orders, as I have taken it for granted that it was not to be disputed." And again, to another in New York: "Upon my first coming to the administration of the government, I have avoided disputing with the Assembly upon points which I wished to see the government in England undertake at all events to determine and settle; and I am afraid that the controversy I have been engaged in, and which has appeared in all the newspapers, will leave some impressions to my disadvantage, when the motives of it are not known. As I wish to retain a share of your esteem," &c.

His anxiety and vindictiveness are apparent in all his letters of this period; regret that he had allowed his expectation of an easy victory to lead him into an irretrievable blunder, and rage against the objects of his abortive attempts. Samuel Adams's remark, that Lord Hillsborough would not thank the Governor for opening this controversy was likely to be verified. Hutchinson was desirous of evading the odium of having needlessly raised the delicate issue, but this he was never able to do. He had invited the contest, and had fallen in it. He had fondly deemed his speech unanswerable. The decline of his influence in the Province, and of his interest at court, dated from this time.

The aim of Adams was, on the other hand, to lodge the responsibility where it belonged, — with the Governor. This he did not only in the answers, but in his correspondence in all directions, especially with the Southern Provinces. His motto still was, "Place the enemy in the wrong." It was necessary that persons of influence at a distance should be made to understand the true state of affairs. In a circular letter from the Committee of Correspondence of the House of Representatives to similar bodies in other Provinces, he refers to this subject: —

"We have particularly expected to hear in what manner a late controversy between the Governor of this Colony and the two Houses of Assembly, relating to the legislative authority of Great

Britain over the Colonies has been treated by Parliament or by administration. But no account of that matter has yet been received here, saving in general, that the opening a controversy of that nature, on the part of the Governor, has embarrassed in some measure the designs of such as have an influence in administration, and wish to see an end put to the dispute subsisting between the Colonies and the mother country. . . . We wish to know your sentiments of the subjects of the controversy, because it is not improbable that either this or some other Colony may be called upon to enter further into it, and for this purpose we beg leave to enclose the pamphlet.”¹

The severe lesson received by his Excellency did not discourage him from re-entering the lists, which he did three weeks after the answer of the House had been reported. His speech was more than double the length of the first, but it advanced nothing which had not been, in effect, said in that of January. Samuel Adams again replied for the House, and on the 2d day of March his answer was accepted.² It is a continuation of the argument of the first paper, and is as decisive an overthrow of the Governor's doctrines. Arthur Lee considered it quite equal to the first, and especially refers to it during the following summer in a letter to his friend. “Your reply,” he says, “to the Governor's second speech is certainly unanswerable. The principle of the argument lies, indeed, in a very narrow compass.”³ This answer, however, did not close the contest. Hutchinson replied again to as little purpose as before, and the whole controversy, printed in pamphlet form, was soon after circulated through the country, Adams industriously sending it abroad, not only to clubs and towns, but to every gentleman of influence within the range of his acquaintance. He was assured, some months after the adjournment, that hopes were indulged in England, by the administration, of prevail-

¹ MSS. rough draft of the circular letter of the Committee of Correspondence of the House of Representatives to the other Colonies, by Samuel Adams, dated “March, 1774.” If any answers were received, they have not been preserved.

² Bancroft, VI. 453.

³ Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, June 11, 1773.

ing on the House to rescind the answers which had been regarded as a bar in the way of reconciliation. The Ministry, however, were informed by a gentleman, to whom application had previously been made, of the hopelessness of the attempt. The House having been driven into their position, as to Parliamentary authority, they could not consistently recede, even had they desired it. The failure in 1768 to induce that body to rescind their Circular Letter, should have taught the Ministry a lesson. Writing to Hawley on this subject, Adams remarks, "I am apprehensive that endeavors will be used to draw us into an incautious mode of conduct, which will be construed as in effect receding from the claim of rights of which we have hitherto been so justly tenacious." His caution, perhaps, made him over-estimate the danger. It was his custom to supply his correspondents with files of papers and public documents, and he frequently obtained valuable information in return. Thus he sent the printed . . . pamphlet to Arthur Lee, in London.

"The whole controversy," he writes, "is here enclosed. It has been published in most of the newspapers on the continent, and engages much of the attention of the other Colonies. This, together with the proceedings of a contemptible town meeting, has awakened the jealousy of all, and has particularly raised the spirit of the most ancient and patriotic Colony of Virginia. Their manly resolves have been transmitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives in a printed sheet of their journals, and our Committee of Correspondence have circulated them into every town and district through the Province."¹

"Every day," replied Mr. Lee, "gives us new light and new strength. At first, it was a tender point to question the authority of Parliament over us *in any case* whatsoever. Time and you have proved that their right is equally questionable *in all cases* whatsoever. It was certainly a great stroke, and has succeeded most happily. It will remain an authentic record to vouch in opposition to their declaratory act, whenever the great and ultimate question is seriously brought forward. It stands uncontroverted."²

¹ Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, April 9, 1773.

² Lee to Adams, Oct. 13, 1773.

The habitual caution of Mr. Adams in his correspondence with distant friends is apparent in many of his letters. He always wrote in such a way that, if intercepted, they could not be used to compromise those to whom they were addressed. Thus, in a letter to Arthur Lee, who advocated the American cause in London, under the signature of "Junius Americanus," he speaks of the writer in the third person.

"I perceive," he says, "by the late London newspapers, that the Governor's first speech had arrived there, and had been very sensibly remarked upon by 'Junius Americanus.' This warm and judicious advocate for the Province, I apprehend, was mistaken in saying that the supreme authority of the British Parliament to legislate for us has been always acknowledged here. When he reads the answer of the House to the speech, he will find the contrary clearly shown, even from Governor Hutchinson's History. What will be the consequence of this controversy, time must discover. It must be placed to the credit of the Governor, that he has quickened a spirit of inquiry into the nature and end of government and the connection of the Colonies with Great Britain, which has for some time past been prevailing among the people. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*. I believe it will be hardly in the power even of that powerful nation to hold so inquisitive and increasing a people long in a state of slavery."¹

While the House were awaiting the Governor's reply to their first answer in the controversy, a committee was appointed to inquire of his Excellency his reasons for refusing official assent to the grants made by the Assembly to the superior judges. The Governor stated, on the following day, that the salaries of those officers were thenceforth to be paid by the Crown. Samuel Adams replied for the committee of which he was chairman, quoting the very words of George the Third when he ascended the throne, that the independence and uprightness of judges were essential to the impartial administration of justice, as one of the best

¹ Adams to Lee, May 6, 1773.

securities of the rights and liberties of his subjects, and as most conducive to the honor of the Crown.

"When we consider," the answer continues, "the many attempts that have been made effectually to render null and void those clauses in our charter upon which the freedom of our Constitution depends, we should be lost to all public feeling should we not manifest a just resentment. We are more and more convinced that it has been the design of Administration totally to subvert the Constitution, and introduce an arbitrary government into this Province; and we cannot wonder that the apprehensions of this people are thoroughly awakened."¹

This discussion was soon after brought to an end in the House by the final speech of the Governor on Parliamentary supremacy. But it was a renewal of the subject which had given rise to the Committees of Correspondence; and Hutchinson, a few days afterwards, described to Secretary Pownall the effects upon the popular mind.

"Our incendiaries," he says, "had influenced the minds of the people to that degree upon the subject of the salaries, that I have not been without apprehensions of new turmoils and outrages, and have had no small difficulty to maintain my ground in such manner as to avoid them. Hearing of some rash speeches of a popular man,² — 'If this won't do, something else must'; 'If the judges will not refuse the salaries from the King, they must take the consequences,' and the like, — I sent for him; and although he was loath to own them, I told him he might depend upon it, that as he was at the head of what they affect to call the Commons, and as he signed all the extraordinary votes which had passed upon the subject of the salaries, some of which were inflammatory, he might be assured that, if any outrages were committed, as some had threatened, sooner or later they would be revenged on him; for although they had gone such a length as they had without animadversions, there were

¹ Journal of the House, Feb. 12, 1773. Bradford's State Papers, p. 366. The answer, with an account of the whole controversy, is inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine, April, 1773; XLIII. 198, 199.

² The Speaker of the House, Thomas Cushing.

bounds which the nation would not suffer to be exceeded, and, when once aroused, there would be no withstanding. He seemed alarmed, and although he acknowledged or conceded that some of the leaders wished to see a mob, yet there was nothing he dreaded more.”¹

A committee was appointed on the following day to prepare letters to the Earl of Dartmouth on the public grievances, and another to Dr. Franklin, who was to present it. This measure was not entirely to the mind of Mr. Adams.

“Our House of Representatives,” he writes soon after to Arthur Lee, “have sent a letter to Lord Dartmouth. This must, without question, be a wise measure, though I must own I was not in it. I feared it would lead the people to a false dependence; I mean upon a minister of state, when it ought to be placed, with God’s assistance, upon themselves.”

The letter to Franklin is also missing; and probably Mr. Adams, who usually wrote the letters of the House to the agent, for the same reason was not now the author.

“I wish,” he said, in the same letter to Lee, “I could hear something more of Lord D. to qualify him for his high office, than merely that he is a *good* man.”² Goodness, I confess, is an essential, though too rare a qualification of a minister of state. Possibly I may not yet have been informed of the whole of his Lordship’s character. Without a greatness of mind adequate to the importance of his station, I fear he may find himself embarrassed with his present connections. It can easily be perceived what principle induced Lord North to recommend to that department a nobleman characterized in America for piety; but what would prevail on his Lordship to join with such connections, unless he had a consciousness that his own abilities were sufficient to defeat the plans of a corrupt administration, I am not able to conceive. It might be well for his Lordship to be assured, that there is now a fairer prospect than ever of a union among the Colonies, which his predecessor felt, and had reason

¹ Hutchinson to Pownall, Feb. 24, 1773.

² Cowper describes Dartmouth as one

“Who wears a coronet and prays.”

to feel, though he affected to despise it. . . . I must now acknowledge your agreeable letter of the 24th of December. I cannot wonder that you almost despair of the British nation. Can that people be saved from ruin who carry their liberties to market, and sell them to the highest bidder? But America shall 'rise full-plumed and glorious from the mother ashes.'"¹

After a session of two months, producing results memorable and important to the great cause, the Governor prorogued the General Assembly on the 6th of March. He had indeed little reason to be pleased with what had happened. He wrote to Lord Dartmouth : —

"I wish I was able to transmit to your Lordship a more favorable account of the proceedings of the Assembly, since the date of my last letter. I have closed the session, and do not intend ever to meet them again. The newspaper which I cover contains the two last messages of the Council and House, and my answer to them; also, the resolves of the House on the salaries of the judges; and I shall cover an attested copy of an address from the Council on the same subject. Your Lordship very justly observes that a nice distinction upon civil rights is far above the reach of the bulk of mankind to comprehend. I experience the truth of it, both in the Council and House of Representatives. The major part of them are incapable of those nice distinctions, and are in each House too ready to give an implicit faith to the assertion of a single leader. I have therefore offered them a view of their Constitution in such plain language, and upon such perfect principles, that it was the general voice of both Houses that they were not to be denied; and the only resource of the leader was, by cloudy and obscure answers to perplex the minds of the members, and then to strike them by advancing that what the Governor had laid before them as their Constitution was perfect slavery, and therefore could not be just."²

¹ Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, April 9, 1773. The last line he quotes from Lee's letter above mentioned.

² Hutchinson to Lord Dartmouth, March 9, 1773.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Anniversary of the Boston Massacre. — Dr. Benjamin Church, Orator of the Day. — His Character and Public Services. — Adams defends the Charter Right of Town Meetings against the Governor. — Correspondence with John Dickinson. — Adams and Dickinson contrasted. — Virginia organizes a Continental Committee of Correspondence. — Adams responds by offering similar Resolutions in the Massachusetts Assembly. — Priority of the Idea established for Massachusetts. — Adams its Earliest Advocate. — Elected a Member of the London Society of the Bill of Rights. — He proposes John Adams and Warren for Membership. — Adams and Richard Henry Lee commence a Correspondence. — Dr. Franklin forwards from London the Secret Letters of Hutchinson. — Exposure and Disgrace of the Governor.

On the 5th of March the annual commemoration of the Massacre was held at the Old South, where the oration was pronounced by Dr. Benjamin Church. The public interest in these ceremonies had not abated. The church, as John Adams recorded in his Diary, "was filled and crowded in every pew, seat, alley, and gallery, by an audience of several thousand people, of all ages and characters, and of both sexes."

Church was one of those whom Samuel Adams had brought forward into political life as a young man of genius. Adams saw his abilities, and determined to secure them for the country, by early imbuing their possessor with his own ideas of virtue and liberty. His pupil, however, wavered as circumstances looked promising or the reverse. In 1768-69, he was engaged upon the *Times*, a journal devoted to liberty, and denounced to the Ministry by Bernard. Its articles were generally republished in New York. He enjoyed the unlimited confidence of the Whigs, and was considered as one of the most valuable members of the party. The first intimation of his backsliding is in one of Hutchinson's letters, in which he informs a friend in England that

the Dr. Church who wrote the Times is now a writer on the side of government.¹ This was when the patriot cause was at the lowest ebb, and the Governor was employing all the talent he could procure to refute the essays of the patriots in the Boston Gazette. Church had already risen to eminence as a physician and surgeon, as well as by his eloquence as a writer and speaker, and he possessed poetical talent of no mean order. Having built an expensive house at Raynham, near Nippahouset Pond, where he resorted for the pleasures of country life, and particularly of fishing, he contracted debts which probably induced him to accept the tempting bribes of Hutchinson. His style as a writer was nervous, correct, and elegant. It would appear, however, that he very soon repented of his treachery; and that not one of his patriot friends suspected him is evident from the fact that, in November of the same year, he was selected to write the letter to the other towns to organize committees of correspondence, and at the time of the Tea Party, a year later, he was an active member of the Boston Committee. But, with all his brilliant gifts, he was a creature of fortune, and lacked those steadfast qualities which carried the Revolution to a successful close.

Samuel Adams and Pemberton, whom we have seen searching for an orator for the occasion, selected Church without a suspicion of his true character, and with a view to his effectiveness as a speaker. The choice was well made. Church pronounced an oration perfectly adapted to the occasion, eloquent and logical. Looking forward to a plan which had already been discussed in Boston, he thanked God that the alarm had gone forth, by the Committees of Correspondence, to the people, who now esteemed their charter rights "to be the ark of God to New England; and," said he, "like that of old, may it deal destruction to the profane hand that shall dare to touch it." . . . "The general infraction of the rights of all the Colonies must finally reduce the discordant

¹ Hutchinson to Bernard, Jan. 29, 1772.

Provinces to a necessary combination for their mutual interest and defence. Some future congress will be the glorious source of the salvation of America! The Amphictyons of Greece, who formed the diet or great council of the states, exhibit an excellent model for the rising Americans.”¹ The crowded auditory drank in the words, and were thus familiarized with an idea, which in another year was to be carried into effect. Samuel Adams, as usual, sent the printed oration to his friends, scattering the seeds of liberty in England as well as in the other Colonies.

A few days after the adjournment of the Legislature, at a town meeting called for the purpose, a committee, with Adams as its chairman, was named to take into consideration the misrepresentations of the Governor in his late message to both Houses, respecting the proceedings of the town at their memorable meeting. On Monday, the 23d, Adams, in his report, occupying two columns of the *Boston Gazette*,² took issue with Hutchinson on the legality of the town meeting which had given birth to the Committees of Correspondence. His Excellency had asserted that the subjects considered at that meeting, which he held was illegal, were such as a town, in its corporate capacity, had no right to act upon. The reply first proves, by an act of the Province made in the reign of William and Mary, that any town meeting called by ten or more freeholders was legal.

“But,” continues Adams, “were there no such laws of the Province, or should our enemies pervert these and other laws made for the same purpose from their plain and obvious intent and meaning, still there is the great and perpetual law of self-preservation, to which every natural person or corporate body hath an inherent right to recur. This being the law of the Creator, no human law can be

¹ Church’s Oration, Boston, March 5, 1773 (Republished in Niles’s *Principles and Acts of the Revolution*, pp. 8–12).

² *Boston Gazette*, March 29, 1773. The town-clerk’s account of the proceedings commences with the statement that Samuel Adams was the author of the report.

of force against it. And, indeed, it is an absurdity to suppose that any such law could be made by common consent, which alone gives validity to human laws. If, then, the ‘matter or thing,’ viz. the fixing salaries to the offices of the judges of the Superior Court, as aforesaid, was such as threatened the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, which we have the authority of the greatest Assembly of the Province to affirm, the inhabitants of this or any other town had certainly an uncontrovertible right to meet together, either in the manner the law has prescribed, or in any other orderly manner, jointly to consult the necessary means of their own preservation and safety. The petitioners wisely chose the rule of the Province law, by applying to the selectmen for a meeting, and they, as it was their duty to do, followed the same rule, and called a meeting accordingly. We are therefore not a little surprised that his Excellency, speaking of this and other principal towns, should descend to such an artful use of words, — that ‘a *number* of inhabitants have assembled together, and having *assumed* the name of *legal* town meetings,’ &c., — thereby appearing to have a design to lead an inattentive reader to believe that no regard was had to the laws of the Province in calling these meetings, and consequently to consider them as illegal and disorderly.

“The inhabitants being met, and for the purpose aforesaid, the points determined, his Excellency says, ‘were such as the law gives the inhabitants of towns, in their corporate capacity, no power to act upon!’ It would be a sufficient justification of the town to say, that no law *forbids* the inhabitants of towns, in their corporate capacity, to determine such points as were then determined. And if there was no positive legal restraint upon their conduct, it was doing them an essential injury to represent it to the world as *illegal*. Where the law makes no special provision for the common safety, the people have a right to consult their own preservation, and the necessary means to withstand a most dangerous attack of arbitrary power. At such a time, it is but a pitiful objection to their thus doing, that the law has not expressly given them power to act upon such points. This is the very language of tyranny. And when such objections are offered to prevent the people’s meeting together in a time of public danger, it affords of itself just grounds of jealousy that a plan was laid for their slavery.”

The paper then proceeds to show that, disregarding the Bill of Rights, which expressly provides that the subject may petition the King, the Governor, in refusing the town the privilege of applying to him for a session of the Legislature, had, in effect, denied them the right of petitioning his Majesty's representative, thereby inflicting a mortal wound on the civil Constitution of the Province. Nothing was dearer to the people of Massachusetts than their time-honored right of town meetings. It was a part of the foundation of New England liberty, which could not be disturbed without tumbling the whole fabric to ruins; and it was this unprecedented position taken by the Governor which so alarmed those who could speculate upon its possible consequences. Hutchinson's plan might be in consequence of ministerial orders, which were perhaps shortly to be enforced. An attempt against the meeting of any one town could only be a step behind a measure to prevent free communication between any number of towns. Adams, therefore, in his report, placed particular stress upon this point.

"We may justly affirm," he says, "that the town had a right at that meeting to communicate their sentiments of matters which so nearly concerned the public liberty, and, consequently, their own preservation. They were matters, to use the words of the Province law, of 'public concernment' to this and every other town and even individual in the Province. Any attempt, therefore, to obstruct the channel of public intelligence in this way argues, in our opinion, a design to keep the people in ignorance of their danger, that they may be the more easily and speedily enslaved. It is notorious to all the world that the liberties of this continent, and especially of this Province, have been *systematically* and successfully invaded from step to step. Is it not, then, to say the least, justifiable in any town, as *being part of the great whole*, when the last effort of tyranny is about to be made, to spread the earliest notice of it far and wide, and hold up the iniquitous system in full view? It is a great satisfaction to us that so many of the respectable towns in the Province, and, we may add, gentlemen of figure in other Colonies, have expressed, and continue to express, themselves much

pleased with the measure; and we encourage ourselves that, from the manifest discovery of a union of sentiments in this Province, which has been one happy fruit of it, there will be the united efforts of *the whole*, in all constitutional and proper methods, to prevent the entire ruin of our liberties.”¹

The meeting unanimously voted to have this report “recorded upon the town’s book as the sense of the inhabitants,” and printed in the several newspapers, and that the Committee of Correspondence should transmit a printed copy to such towns and districts as they might correspond with. This was done, and the above extracts are taken from the copy sent by the Committee to a town in Worcester county, and signed by the faithful William Cooper, their clerk.

Could Samuel Adams have seen the letters Hutchinson was writing about this time, on the very subject of which the report treated,—the legality of town meetings,—he would have found that the Governor was creating among influential persons in government circles an impression that the democratic tendencies and privileges of those meetings were dangerous to the ministerial plan in New England. Thus he was preparing the way for new encroachments on the popular rights. His letters to Sir Francis Bernard and others, some of which, as the supposed best authority on American affairs, were read by the King, must have had great weight in shaping the measures of government, for they were quoted in Parliament, and used in part to justify the plan of coercion which was at last adopted. To quote briefly from a few of these letters: to General Gage he writes:—

“I beg leave to acquaint you that, by an unfortunate mistake, soon after the charter a law passed which made every town in the Province a corporation perfectly democratic; every matter being determined by the major vote of the inhabitants; and although the

¹ Massachusetts Spy, March 25, 1773.

intent of the law was to confine their proceedings to the immediate proceedings of the town, yet for many years past the town of Boston has been used to interest itself in every affair of moment which concerned the Province in general.”¹

And again, to Secretary Pownall, in relation to Adams’s report above quoted : —

“The use which the town of Boston has made of its power as a corporation, in passing the enclosed votes, is far from warrantable. The performance itself is generally considered as a piece of sophistry and evasion, which is characteristic in the present Leader of the town, and will engage the attention of the people no longer than until some other like publication appears to take the place of it.”²

Again, after describing the “restless incendiary,” as he called Samuel Adams, he writes to another correspondent : —

“By a law made soon after our charter, and unfortunately allowed by the Crown, every town is a distinct corporation ; and although their powers are limited to matters of public concernment to the town, yet, when the inhabitants are once assembled, they take upon themselves all matters of government, and they are sure that their Representatives in the General Assembly will never consent to any act to control or restrain them.”³

These extracts sufficiently display the opinions of Hutchinson on this head. He had for some time meditated and recommended a change in the Provincial charter, such as would deprive the local government of its democratic character, the least tinge of which he counted a misfortune in the Constitution, and calculated to keep the people mindful of their rights.

From the time that the celebrated John Dickinson commenced writing his Farmer’s Letters in the fall of 1767, Mr. Adams had felt his heart warm towards him with the

¹ Hutchinson to General Gage, March 7, 1773.

² Hutchinson to J. Pownall, March 27, 1773.

³ Hutchinson to Colonel Williams, April 7, 1773.

sympathy of one great mind appreciating another through his works, without a personal acquaintance. He was so pleased with the purity of style and devoted patriotism of those writings, that he repeatedly quoted them in his own essays, as if anxious that the New England people should not miss their benign influence; and he often held them up to his fellow-citizens as worthy of their frequent consideration. No man south of Massachusetts had done so much in the press as Dickinson to support the popular cause. Later, however, his writings had grown less frequent, and Adams, solicitous that the subject of Parliamentary supremacy which had been raised in Massachusetts should also be discussed in the other Provinces, now wrote to Dickinson for the double purpose of engaging his powerful pen on that point, and to establish a somewhat more familiar relationship between them than that of merely hearing each other mentioned by mutual friends. There was a wide difference between the two men. Both were ardently devoted to American liberty, each was recognized as the ablest writer in his section of the continent, and each commanded public respect by his unaffected piety and love of justice. But while the most cherished wish of Adams was the total independence of his country, Dickinson, who for some time influenced Pennsylvania through the general admiration of his character, shrunk from such a thought, and longed for nothing more than conciliation. Adams was acquainted with poverty and the humble in life, and had reached eminence among his townsmen by mingling with public affairs, and personally leading in political measures. Dickinson, surrounded by wealth, and enjoying leisure to cultivate his scholarly tastes, was without physical vigor, loved repose and retirement, and was fearful of precipitancy in the measures of the New-Englanders. The one, with his inflexible will and ceaseless energy, never lost sight of his purpose, and yet constantly tempered his zeal with a sagacious appreciation of the character of the people and the circumstances of

the time. The other, with an organization not more sensitive than that of Adams, had nothing decisive in his composition, and lacked the power which constitutes a leader. Yet the two men had, each in his own particular sphere, exceeded all others in creating public opinion. Adams saw that, if he could induce Dickinson to commence writing on the subject of the late controversy, the name of the author would command general attention, and Dickinson would stand committed to the position taken by the Massachusetts Legislature, thus leading the way to the adoption of the same doctrine by the Pennsylvania Assembly. The correspondence, which has been preserved, is as follows: —

BOSTON, March 27, 1773.

SIR, —

I take the liberty of enclosing an oration delivered by Dr. Benjamin Church on the Anniversary of the 5th of March, 1770, which I beg the favor of you to accept.

The proceedings of our General Assembly at our last session you may perhaps have seen in the newspapers. Our Governor in a manner forced the Assembly to express their sentiments of so delicate, though important a subject as the supreme authority of the Parliament of Great Britain over the Colonies. The silence of the other Assemblies, of late, upon any subject that concerns the joint interest of the Colonies, rendered it somewhat difficult to determine what to say with propriety. As the sense of the Colonies might possibly be drawn from what might be advanced by this Province, you will conceive that the Assembly would have chosen to be silent till the sentiments of at least gentlemen of eminence out of this Province could be known. At the same time that silence would have been construed as the acknowledgment of the Governor's principles, and a submission to the fatal effect of them. What will be the consequences of this controversy time must determine. If the Governor entered into it of his own notion, as I am apt to believe he did, he may not have the approbation of the Ministry for counteracting what appears to me to have been for two years past their favorite design, to keep the Americans quiet, and to lull them into security.

Could your health or leisure admit of it, a publication of your sentiments on this and other matters of the most interesting importance would be of substantial advantage to your country. Your candor will excuse the freedom I take in this repeated request. An individual has some right, in behalf of the public, still to urge the assistance of those who have heretofore proved themselves its ablest advocates.

I shall take it a favor, if you will present the other enclosed oration to Mr. Reed, whom I once had the pleasure of conversing with in this place, and to whom I would have written by this unexpected opportunity, but am prevented by the hurry of the bearer.

I am, sir, with sincere regard, your most humble servant,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

JOHN DICKINSON, Esq., Philadelphia.

P. S.—Mr. Josiah Quincy, a young gentleman, but eminent in the profession of the law, is soon expected to arrive at Philadelphia from South Carolina. Could he be introduced into the company of Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Reed, he would certainly esteem himself honored, and his conversation would not be unentertaining even to them.

Upon what other occasion they had corresponded is not known, unless he refers by this “repeated request” to the vote of thanks which Boston, in April, 1768, had sent to the author of the Farmer’s Letters by the hand of Samuel Adams. Dickinson immediately replied:—

FAIRHILL, near Philadelphia,

April 10, 1773.

DEAR SIR,—

I return you my hearty thanks for your favor of the 27th of March, which has just come to my hands, and for the enclosed oration.

I have seen with the sincerest pleasure the proceedings you mention. They are greatly approved, even by those who, by a strange combination of events, are affected with a political lethargy. The firmness, temper, and wisdom of your Assembly are acknowledged to do them honor. May the same zeal, united with the same knowledge, still govern the conduct of your truly respectable Province,

till time shall ripen the period for asserting more successfully the liberties of these Colonies: that thereby they may be kept on the watch to seize the happy opportunity when it offers.

My heart is devoted with the most ardent affection to the interests of my countrymen. I join in their opposition to the encroachments from Great Britain from two motives, — a love of liberty and a love of peace. For I am convinced in my own mind, that no solid, permanent tranquillity will be established in America, until they attain "*placidam sub libertate quietem*."

But, sir, though these are my sentiments, I must beg you will please to excuse me from enlarging on them in any publication.

I never had that idea of my abilities or learning, to suppose that anything that I could offer to my countrymen could merit their attention after the same subject had been discussed by another person. I never took up my pen as a volunteer, but always as a man pressed into the service of my country by a sense of my duty to her. And, though for a little while I may have endeavored to maintain a post, yet it has only been till a better soldier could come more completely armed to defend it.

The cause is in excellent hands. May Heaven prosper their worthy efforts.

I shall be extremely glad to pay my compliments to Mr. Quincy on his arrival here, and shall be extremely glad if this letter goes by Mr. George Clymer of Philadelphia, a gentleman of such uncommon merit, that he should have the pleasure of your acquaintance.

I am, sir, with the strictest esteem,

Your very humble servant,

JOHN DICKINSON.

SAMUEL ADAMS, Esq.

The idea of a union of the Colonies for mutual protection, as we have seen, had long been the prevailing wish of Samuel Adams. It has been shown that he considered it necessary first to organize his own Province as a stepping-stone to the more general application of the plan. It had been his intention to propose intercolonial committees of correspondence when the Legislature met, early in January; but though he desired to see his invention at work on a larger scale, his caution restrained him, until he could feel

certain that the majority of the other Assemblies would adopt it. For he well knew that so important a move on the part of Massachusetts, if not cordially responded to by her sister Provinces, would tend rather to injure than assist the cause. The controversy, too, on Parliamentary authority commenced and ended with that session, occupying its time nearly to the exclusion of all other subjects; and Adams may have thought it prudent, since that point had been unexpectedly raised, to await some expression of opinion thereon from beyond New England, before venturing further with the committee system.

But even as Hutchinson prorogued the General Court, troubled with the conviction that "the other Assemblies throughout the continent were to be desired by a circular letter to join the Massachusetts House of Representatives,"¹ the great project had been achieved in Virginia. On the 4th of March, the young and gifted Dabney Carr offered, in the House of Burgesses, resolutions for a system of intercolonial correspondence, which were eloquently supported by Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry. On the 12th, the resolutions were reported and adopted, and the circular was sent to every Colony. Virginia thus organized the Colonies under a general system.² The resolves reached Boston after the

¹ Hutchinson to Bernard, Feb. 23, 1773.

² Though the first intercolonial committee was set in motion in Virginia, the scheme originated with Samuel Adams in Massachusetts, where the earliest advance was made towards a practical union of the Colonies for this purpose, in the winter of 1768, when the Circular Letter was sent to all the other Provinces. And in 1770 and 1771, on his motion, distinct intercolonial committees of correspondence were appointed. The success of the Massachusetts local committees must, as Hutchinson wrote, have suggested to Virginia to effect the plan on a more extended scale. The conception sprung undoubtedly from the Provincial system, accounts of which had reached Virginia. And if it be alleged that the idea had its origin with Jonathan Mayhew of Boston, in June, 1766, when he suggested to James Otis a communion of Colonies by sending circulars from the Massachusetts Assembly to the rest, it will still appear that the thought was but a repetition of that contained in Samuel Adams's Boston Instructions in May, 1764. No man of the Revolution preceded Samuel Adams in the idea of a union of the Colonies in opposition to Parliamentary

adjournment of the Assembly ; but the Committee of Correspondence, — a body exercising in the interim to some extent the powers of the Legislature, immediately had several hundred copies printed at Edes and Gills's establishment, and sent them to every town and district in Massachusetts. Replies full of cheerful encouragement came back, displaying a determined resolution at the proper time to make the "appeal to Heaven, and drive tyranny from these northern climes."¹

At this time Mr. Adams received from Arthur Lee a resolution of the Society of the Bill of Rights in London, electing him a member,² to which he replied : —

"I must by no means omit to request you to present my most encroachments. The letter of Richard Henry Lee to John Dickinson, in July, 1768, recommending the appointment of select committees by all the Colonies for mutual information and a private correspondence "between the lovers of liberty in every Province," was some five months after the Massachusetts Circular Letter of that year, — suggested and written by Samuel Adams, — had reached the other Colonies, and been published throughout the continent, urging a union and correspondence between the several Assemblies.

In Tucker's *Life of Washington*, it is admitted that the honor of having first suggested the plan of intercolonial committees belonged to Massachusetts, though, owing to the severe censures passed in England on the Circular Letter of 1768, the idea was not consummated until Virginia gave it efficiency in 1773. The writer refers to the resolutions introduced into the Massachusetts Legislature in November, 1770, and June, 1771. (See, *ante*, I. 373, 406.) All that is claimed for Adams is the origination of the idea and the suggestion of it to the Legislature. That it was not perfected earlier in the Revolution was not for the want of continual exertions for its accomplishment.

But although Virginia organized the system, it does not appear that she went any further at this time than formally to adopt it. None of the intercolonial Committees are known to have put it to any visible use until Samuel Adams, for that of Massachusetts, started it into life by opening a correspondence in October of this year with the other Committees on the threatened danger of the tea importations. In March, 1774, he again addressed the Committees of the sister Colonies, and hinted about the "total silence" they had kept; but to neither of these is any reply known to have been made. Thus not only did the *idea* of intercolonial Committees of Correspondence originate in Massachusetts, but the system was there first put in *practical operation*.

¹ Bancroft, VI. 456.

² A. Lee to S. Adams, Jan. 25, 1773. The election was made some time before this date.

respectful compliments to the Society of the Bill of Rights, and return them my hearty thanks for the great honor they have done me, in admitting me one of their members. The gentlemen may be assured that this unexpected mark of their respect adds to the obligation which I have ever held myself under, to employ the small share of ability which God has given me in vindicating the rights of my country and of mankind. . . . As you have confided in me to recommend one or more gentlemen of this place as candidates for the Society of the Bill of Rights, I can, with the greatest integrity, nominate my two worthy and intimate friends, John Adams and Joseph Warren, Esqrs., the one eminent in the profession of law, and the other equally so in that of physic; both of them men of an unblemished moral character and zealous advocates for the common rights of mankind.”¹

Before the close of the year, John Adams was elected, and received at the hands of Stephen Sayre the resolution to that effect, and Warren doubtless also became a member.²

When Samuel Adams and Arthur Lee had been corresponding for some two years, the latter wrote to his brother, Richard Henry, at Chantilly, Virginia, with the view of establishing a similar communication between him and the Northern statesman. The suggestion was met with alacrity, and, in April, Adams received a letter inviting the correspondence, which, commencing at once, was continued at intervals for sixteen years. The firmest friendship and confidence existed between Adams and Richard Henry Lee from this time forth. They were much alike in character, being equally determined in their support of American rights, and imbued with the fervid religious sentiment which distinguished the men of the Revolution.

“From a person quite unknown to you,” said Lee, “some apology may be necessary for this letter. The name of my brother, Dr. Arthur Lee of London, may perhaps furnish me with this apology. To be firmly attached to the cause of liberty on virtuous principles

¹ S. Adams to A. Lee, April 9 and 12, 1773. See also the *Boston Gazette*, May 23, 1774.

² For the form of the resolutions, see *John Adams's Works*, II. 325.

is a powerful cause of union, and renders proper the most easy communication of sentiment, however artfully disunion may be promoted and encouraged by tyrants and their abettors. If this be true in general, how more certainly is it so in that particular state of affairs in which every scheme that cunning can form, or power execute, is practised to reduce to slavery so considerable a portion of the human species as North America does and may contain. Every day's experience proves this to an attentive observer.

"Among other instances in proof, if I mistake not, the manner of resenting the loss of the *Gaspee* is one. At this distance, and through the uncertain medium of newspapers, we may never perhaps have received a just account of this affair. I should be extremely glad, sir, when your leisure permits, to have as true a state of the matter as the public with you has been furnished with. At all events, this military parade appears extraordinary, unless the intention be to violate all law and legal forms, in order to establish the ministerial favorite, but fatal precedent of removing Americans beyond the water, to be tried for supposed offences committed here. This is so unreasonable and so unconstitutional a stretch of power, that I hope it will never be permitted to take place while a spark of virtue or one manly sentiment remains in America. The primary end of government seems to be the security of life and property; but this ministerial law would, if acquiesced in, totally defeat every idea of social security and happiness. You may easily, sir, perceive that I understand myself writing to a firm and worthy friend of the just rights and liberty of America, by the freedom with which this letter is penned. Captain Snow, of your town, who comes frequently here, and who takes care of this, will bring me any letter you may be pleased to favor me with."¹

In his anxiety to promote union, Lee was to the South what Samuel Adams had ever been to New England. It was uppermost in his mind, — and that the scheme had not already been attempted by him was perhaps owing to the difference between the character of his sparsely-settled section of the continent, and the democratic communities of Massachusetts, where the people were apt to receive whatever wise

¹ Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams, Feb. 4, 1773.

and efficacious plans their leaders advanced. The idea coming from the all-important Colony of Virginia, whose co-operation in such a project he had long desired, was instantly seized upon by Adams; for the letter was dated a month before the passage of the resolutions for the Virginia Committee of Correspondence, and he gladly responded to the cordial and unaffected greeting of the Southerner.

"Your letter to me of the 4th of February last," he replies, "I received with singular pleasure, not only because I had long wished for a correspondence with some gentleman in Virginia, but more particularly because I had frequently heard of your character and merit as a warm advocate of virtue and liberty. I had often thought it a misfortune, rather than a fault, in the friends of American independence and freedom, not taking care to open every channel of communication. The Colonies are all embarked on the same bottom. The liberties of all are alike invaded by the same haughty power. The conspirators against their common rights have indeed exerted their brutal force, or applied their insidious acts differently in the several Colonies, as they have thought it would best serve their purpose of oppression and tyranny. How necessary, therefore, that *all* should be early acquainted with the particular circumstances of *each*, in order that the wisdom and strength of the *whole* may be employed upon every occasion. We have heard of bloodshed and even civil war in our sister Colony of North Carolina, and how strange is it that the best account we have of that tragical scene should be brought to us from England.

"This Province, and this town especially, have suffered a great share of ministerial wrath and insolence. But God be thanked, there is, I trust, a spirit prevailing which will not submit to slavery. The compliance of New York in making annual provision for a military force designed to carry acts of tyranny into execution, the timidity of some, and the silence of others, are discouraging. But the active vigilance, the manly generosity, and the steady perseverance of Virginia and South Carolina give us reason to hope that the fire of true liberty and patriotism will at length spread itself through the continent: the consequence would be the acquisition of all we wish for. The friends of liberty in this town have lately made a successful attempt to obtain an explicit sentiment of

a great number of the towns of this Province, and the number is daily increasing. The very attempt was alarming to our adversaries, and the happy effects of it mortifying to them. I would propose it for your consideration, whether the establishment of committees of correspondence among the several towns, in every Colony, would tend to promote that general union upon which the security of the whole depends. The reception of the truly patriotic resolves of the House of Burgesses of Virginia gladden the hearts of all who are friends to liberty. Our Committee of Correspondence had a special meeting on the occasion, and determined to circulate immediately printed copies of them in every town in the Province, in order to make them as extensively useful as possible. I am desired by them to assure you of their veneration for your most ancient Colony and their unfeigned esteem for the gentlemen of your Committee. This, indeed, is a poor return. I hope you will have the hearty concurrence of every Assembly on the continent. It is a measure which will be attended with great and good consequences. Our General Assembly is dissolved, and writs will soon be issued, according to the charter, for a new Assembly to be holden the last Wednesday in May next. I think I can almost assure you there will be a return of such members as will heartily co-operate with you in your spirited measures. The enormous stride in erecting what may be called a court of inquisition in America is sufficient to excite indignation in every heart capable of feeling.

"I am expecting an authentic copy of that commission, which I shall send to you by the first opportunity after I have received it. The letter from the new Secretary of State to the Governor of Rhode Island, which possibly you may have seen in the newspapers, may be depended upon as genuine. I received it from a gentleman of the Council of that Colony, who took it from the original. I wish the Assembly of that Province had acted with more firmness than they have done: but, as the court of inquiry is adjourned, they may possibly have another trial. I have a thousand things to say to you, but am prevented from want of time, having had but an hour's notice of the sailing of this vessel. I cannot conclude, however, without assuring you that a letter from you, as often as your leisure admits, would lay me under great obligations."¹

¹ Samuel Adams to R. H. Lee, April 10, 1773.

In the middle of this century, when the means of conveyance by railroad and steamboat have placed remote parts of the country in easy communication, and the electric telegraph has annihilated space and time, it is hard to realize the difficulties of intercourse during the Colonial period. The fact which Samuel Adams deplored in his letter is an evidence of the isolated condition of the several Provinces, especially in the winter season. The roads, never in good condition, must then have been at times impassable, and letters went oftener by coasting vessels than by land carriage. The government, after the Stamp Act troubles, seeing the danger of facilitating intercourse between the Colonies, did little or nothing to expedite or cheapen the means of travel, its policy being, as Lee had said in his letter, to promote disunion among them; and probably, after 1768, when the Massachusetts Circular Letter so alarmed the Ministry, Lord Hillsborough's measures were taken with a view of discouraging intercommunication. The obstacles to obtaining speedy intelligence are shown by the fact, that reliable news of the troubles in North Carolina, though occurring in May and June, 1771, seems not to have reached Boston until the next year, and then through the medium of England. The letter of Richard Henry Lee, written on the 4th of February, was received by Mr. Adams in Boston about two months afterwards by the hands of the master of a coasting packet, and the answer was returned by a similar conveyance. When important messages were to be transmitted, an express rider was dispatched from one Colony to another. Thus in July, 1769, expresses were sent to Gen. Gage from Boston, in relation to the resolutions of the House, and in May, 1774, Paul Revere rode an express from Boston to Philadelphia with the votes of the town respecting the Port Act. He accomplished the distance in six days, having started on the 14th and reached Philadelphia on the evening of the 20th. Horse riding, as in all thinly inhabited countries without perfect roads, was then very general. We find John Adams, in his

Diary, for several years, riding from one county-seat to another in Massachusetts, during the term of the Courts; and in September, 1775, the delegates to the Continental Congress probably made the greater part of the distance from Watertown to Philadelphia on horseback. Samuel Adams, after his arrival, writing to Elbridge Gerry, says: "I arrived in this city on the 12th instant, having rode full three hundred miles on horseback," using one of the horses of his friend John Adams, offered the day after they left Watertown. That journey, including the stoppages, occupied fifteen days.¹ Horsemanship was, to a great extent, a necessity, as well as a means of recreation in New England, and if the art has passed away as the modern luxurious road-vehicles have come into more general use, it may be questioned whether the change has not been made at the sacrifice of an accomplishment, healthful in practice and manly in character. It was this difficulty of reaching each other, except by letter at long intervals, that gave rise to the inter-colonial Committees of Correspondence, whose messages, passing to and fro in advance of the usual post-riders, enabled the Provinces to maintain a tolerable frequency of intercourse, to exchange their views on important subjects, and preserve a concert of action.

The elections on the 6th of May resulted triumphantly for the liberty party, — Cushing, Samuel Adams, Hancock, and Phillips receiving nearly every vote cast. In the instructions which the town gave them for their guidance in the approaching session, they were desired to consider seriously if the salvation of American liberty and the restoration of friendship between America and Great Britain did not demand an immediate concurrence with "the wise and salutary proposal of our noble, patriotic sister Colony of Virginia." Adams enclosed the instructions in a letter to

¹ From August 28 to September 12. See S. Adams to E. Gerry, Philadelphia, Sept. 26, 1775, in Austin's *Life of Gerry*; and John Adams's *Works*, II. 421.

Arthur Lee. They serve, he said, "to communicate their sentiments and spirit to the other towns, and may be looked upon as fresh Appeals to the World."¹ The Assembly met on the 26th at Boston, when Samuel Adams was elected Clerk, and Thomas Cushing Speaker.² Adams had written a week before to Arthur Lee: —

"Our General Assembly will meet next week. What kind of a budget the Governor will then open is uncertain. It is whispered he intends to bring about a coalition of parties; but how he will attempt it, I am at a loss to conceive. Surely he cannot think that the body of this people will be quieted till there is an end put to all oppressions they are under; and he dares not propose a coalition on such terms, because it would disgust those who are the instruments of, and sharers in, the oppression."³

Out of twenty-eight Councillors chosen, all but three (John Adams, Bowers, and Phillips) were accepted; and

¹ Adams to Lee, May 6, 1773.

² The first act of the House was always to elect a Clerk. In the Journal for this year the form of oath is printed, and precedes the regular business. It is: "Whereas you, Mr. Samuel Adams, are chosen Clerk of the House of Representatives, you do swear that you will enter all the votes and orders thereof, and in all things relating to your office will act faithfully and impartially, according to your best skill and judgment. So help you God.

"T. HUTCHINSON, Governor."

³ Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, May 17, 1773. The following letter appears in the Historical Magazine, January, 1863; VII. 20.

Boston, May 14, 1773.

GENTLEMEN, —

I must beg the favor of you to present my unfeigned regards to the town, and acquaint them that, by reason of bodily indisposition, I am unable to discharge the duty they have been pleased to assign me as moderator of their meeting, which is to be held this day by adjournment. I am much obliged to the town for the honor done me, and esteem it a very great misfortune whenever it is not in my power to render them services proportionate to my own inclination.

With all due respect, I remain, gentlemen,

Your friend and fellow-citizen,

SAMUEL ADAMS.

TO THE SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN OF BOSTON.

among these was John Hancock, who, as in the previous year, declined the office, and retained his seat in the House of Representatives. The first business was to consider the Virginia letter in regard to a committee of correspondence. On Friday, the 28th, "according to order," the several letters from the Speakers of the Assemblies of Virginia and Rhode Island were taken up, when, on motion of Samuel Adams, the following resolves were accepted:—

"Whereas the Speaker hath communicated to this House a letter from the truly respectable House of Burgesses, in his Majesty's ancient Colony of Virginia, enclosing a copy of the resolves entered into by them on the 12th of March last, and requesting that a committee of this House may be appointed to communicate from time to time with a corresponding committee, then appointed by the said House of Burgesses in Virginia;

"And whereas this House is fully sensible of the necessity and importance of the union of the several Colonies in America, at a time when it already appears that the rights and liberties of all are systematically invaded; in order that the joint wisdom of the whole may be employed in consulting their common safety:

Resolved, That this House have a very grateful sense of the obligations they are under to the House of Burgesses in Virginia for the vigilance, firmness, and wisdom which they have discovered at all times in support of the rights and liberties of the American Colonies, and do heartily concur with them and their said judicious and spirited resolves.

"*Resolved*, That a standing committee of correspondence and inquiry be appointed, to consist of fifteen members, any eight of whom to be a quorum; whose business it shall be to obtain the most early and authentic intelligence of all such acts and resolutions of the British Parliament or proceedings of administration as may relate to or affect the British Colonies in America; and to keep up and maintain a correspondence and communication with our sister Colonies respecting these important considerations; and the result of such, their proceedings, from time to time, to lay before the House.

"*Resolved*, That it be an instruction to the said committee that they do, without delay, inform themselves particularly of the prin-

ciples and authority on which was constituted a court of inquiry held in Rhode Island, said to be vested with powers to transport persons accused of offences committed in America to places beyond the seas to be tried.

“Resolved, That the said committee be further instructed to prepare and report to this House a draft of a very respectful answer to the letter received from the Speaker of the Honorable House of Burgesses of Virginia; and another to a letter received from the Speaker of the Honorable House of Representatives of the Colony of Rhode Island;¹ also a circular letter to the Speakers of the several other Houses of Assembly on this continent, enclosing the aforesaid resolves, and requesting them to lay the same before their respective Assemblies, in confidence that they will readily and cheerfully comply with the wise and salutary resolves of the House of Burgesses in Virginia.”²

Massachusetts thus took the first opportunity to respond to the call of Virginia; and the two principal Colonies, hand in hand, led the way to American freedom. From this moment there existed in Massachusetts two distinct bodies having their origin from the people, independent of the Provincial charter, and yet violating no law of that instrument; the one emanating from the town municipal government, and extending in its operations to the remotest settlements of the Province; the other, a continuation of the same plan, but springing from the representative government, and embracing the whole thirteen American Colonies. The one was local, and organized a Province. The other infused order and system into a continent, where before only uncertainty and want of harmony existed. For however much the principle of resistance to tyranny may have actuated the several Provinces, their disunited efforts would be unprof-

¹ The correspondence with Rhode Island was relative to the royal Commissioners, who had been sitting at Providence to inquire into the affair of the Gaspee. The letter to the Massachusetts House of Representatives was written in pursuance of the advice given the principal members of the Legislature of that Colony by Samuel Adams in December, 1772.

² Journal of the House for May 28, 1773. Bradford's State Papers, p. 400.

itable without that method and concerted purpose which alone gives consequence to the movements of numbers. Hutchinson, for a year past, had predicted, with gloomy foreboding, the bursting out of this flame. And now the unanimity of the House left him no hope of a reconsideration, for the resolves had passed by a vote of one hundred and nine against four. In his History he calls this measure "a most glaring attempt to alter the Constitution of the Colonies, by assuming to one branch of the Legislature the powers of the whole ; by continuing by delegation powers of government, after the authority from which the delegation was derived had expired ; and by uniting in one body a number of bodies, which, by their constitution, were intended to be kept separate and unconnected. It was an act which ought to have been considered as an avowal of independency, because it could be justified only upon the principle of independency."¹ The spreading of that fire was seen in England with the alarm which its threatening aspect might well beget. The Committee held its sittings in Boston during the recess of the General Court, and Hutchinson was required "to signify his Majesty's disapprobation."² But there was no power in the realm which could prevent a free interchange of sentiment between men, towns, or Colonies. New Hampshire and Connecticut had joined in the movement ; and the way was open to successful resistance.

The time was at hand when the hypocrisy of Hutchinson and Oliver was to be clearly exposed. None of the patriots doubted that the Governor, in particular, had been for years engaged in a secret correspondence with the Ministry, hostile to the liberties of America. The conviction of this in the mind of Samuel Adams had been so strong since 1768, that he hints at it in almost all of his political writings and letters. Hitherto the secret had been faithfully kept, and nothing tangible could be made to appear. But the opportunity for exposure had at last arrived. Franklin, while

¹ Hutchinson's History, III. 397.

² Bradford's State Papers, p. 411. .

urging in London a change in the oppressive policy of the government towards his countrymen, was informed by Sir John Temple¹ that this policy had been suggested by persons in America, and that the measures complained of had in reality fallen short of the plans and solicitations addressed by such persons to the Ministry. To verify this statement, Temple exhibited to Franklin a package of Hutchinson's and Oliver's letters, in his possession, addressed to persons in official positions, representing American affairs in the most irritating light, — in fact, of the same character as those already quoted, traducing private character, urging the alteration of the Provincial charter, misstating the popular sentiment, and setting forth the necessity of establishing military rule over the Colonies. Franklin obtained leave from Temple to send the letters to Cushing, the Speaker of the House, who received them in March, and showed them to a select few, among whom was Samuel Adams. Before the present Assembly convened, he thus alluded to them and their author in a letter to Arthur Lee : —

“A *few* of his letters we have seen, but are restrained at present from publishing. Could they be made generally known, his friends must desert him. It is a pity, when the most important intelligence is communicated with such restrictions as that it serves rather to gratify the curiosity of a few than to promote the public good. I wish we could see the letters he has written since his advancement to the government. His friends give out that they ‘are replete with tenderness to the Province.’ If so — *I speak with assurance* — they are the reverse of those which he wrote before.”²

John Adams, Hawley, and Hancock also read them, but as they came from England under injunctions of secrecy, and no copies could be taken, they were useless for the dis-

¹ How Temple became possessed of the letters remains a mystery. That it was he who furnished them to Franklin, there is proof in a paper with his own signature, read by R. C. Winthrop in his Address before the Maine Historical Society, p. 37.

² Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, May 17, 1773.

comfiture of their author.¹ The mention made of Hancock in these letters aroused his indignation, and in conjunction with Hawley he determined to expose them. More than two months elapsed, however, before any definite plan was decided upon, and, in the mean time it became generally known that such letters were in the possession of the leaders. The Governor's friends were much agitated, and without being allowed a sight of the mysterious package, they pronounced the letters not genuine, while the people understood that they aimed at an entire subversion of their rights.²

On the 2d day of June, one of the members informed the House that he had matters that greatly concerned the Province to communicate, and moved that the galleries be cleared. This done, and the members having been enjoined to attend, Samuel Adams acquainted them that certain letters of an extraordinary nature, that had been written and sent to England, greatly to the prejudice of the Province, had been placed in his possession by a gentleman,³ who consented that they should be read in the House, under certain restrictions, which were that the letters should be neither printed nor copied in whole or in part. The motion having prevailed that the letters should be read under these restrictions, their contents were soon made known. They were from Hutchinson, Oliver, Paxton, Moffat, Auchmuty, Rogers, and Rowe; and on the motion of Hancock, from the committee, the whole were voted to be of a tendency and design to overthrow the constitution of the government, and introduce arbitrary power into the Province. "Very im-

¹ John Adams's Diary (Works, II. 318).

² Boston Gazette, June 7, 1773.

³ Hutchinson's History, III. 402-403. His published account agrees substantially with his private letters and with the Journal of the House. Writing to Governor Tryon of New York, July 6, 1773, he says: "After the Assembly had sat some days, the Clerk, who was their leader, informed them that certain letters had been put into his hands, which he was obliged to return without copies being taken, and if they would hear them read upon those conditions, he would read them. This they agreed to."

portant events," said a public writer, "will soon transpire, which will bring many *dark* things to *light*, gain many proselytes to the cause of freedom, make tyrannical rulers tremble, and give occasion for the whole people to bless the providence of God, who causeth the wicked man to fall into the pit he hath digged for another."¹ A correspondence now passed between the House and the Governor, in which he flatly denied ever having written any public or private letter with the intention to subvert the Constitution, and he desired a transcript of their proceedings, and to be informed to what letters they referred. The dates of the letters were sent to him, and at the same time the House asked for copies of such letters as the Governor had written, of those dates, relating to public affairs. These his Excellency refused to furnish, and again denied that, in the letters under consideration, there was anything respecting the particular constitution of the government, as derived from the charter.²

As it was important to have copies taken and printed for the use of the Assembly, a committee was appointed to consider some means by which the House could be honorably and fully possessed of the letters; and its chairman, Mr. Hawley, reported on the 10th, "that Mr. Adams had acquainted them that, having conversed with the gentleman from whom he received the letters, he is authorized to inform the House that the said gentleman consents (as he finds that copies of said letters are already abroad, and have been publicly read) that the House should be fully possessed of them to print, copy, or make what other use of them they please, relying on the goodness of the House that the original letters be returned (in their own time), they retaining attested copies of the same for their use." Mr. Adams, being called upon, repeated the declaration; and on the 16th, the printed pamphlet was brought into the House, and Mr. Adams in person carried up copies for each mem-

¹ Boston Gazette, June 7, 1773.

² Bradford's State Papers, p. 404.

ber of the Council.¹ Permission having been obtained, the pamphlet was circulated, and sent to the several towns by the Committee of Correspondence, with spirited letters on the subject.²

This plain exposure completed the ruin of Hutchinson. His evil devices had returned to plague their inventor. He was now past sixty years of age, had struggled long and persistently to secure pensions for himself and family, and had scrupled at nothing to destroy his country and its defenders. But the game had gone against him. "I have wrote," he says to Bernard, "what ought not to be made public," and he desired his friend in London to burn such of his letters as might raise a clamor.³ The House immediately passed a series of resolutions, showing the pernicious tendency of the letters, and Samuel Adams drew up a petition to the King praying for the removal of Hutchinson and Oliver forever from the government.⁴

If Franklin ever knew in what manner the letters were

¹ Journal of the House for June, 1773.

² Gentleman's Magazine, July, 1773; XLIII. 358.

³ Hutchinson to Bernard, June 14, 1773. Bancroft, VI. 463, 464.

⁴ Journal of the House for June, 1773. The original draft is in the handwriting of Adams.

The vote was not unanimous (see Hutchinson, III. 406). Among the Adams papers is a letter from J. Pickering, dated Salem, July 5, 1773, in which he complains that on arriving home, after the adjournment of the Assembly, he found an impression prevailing among his constituents that he had turned Tory. He adds: "As I always spoke with freedom, so I always did, and will freely give my vote as I did at that time, without fear, favor, affection, or hope of reward from any quarter whatever. I want no feathers; they will not stick on me without much political tar." On the back of the letter is this brief endorsement in the autograph of Samuel Adams: — "Letter from Mr. J. Pickering, an honest and sensible friend of y^e liberty of his country, July 8, '73." It was at the meeting of the Privy Council where this petition was presented, that Franklin was subjected to the invective of Wedderburn, who appeared for Hutchinson and Oliver (see Bancroft, VI. 495 - 497). The origin of the resolutions which preceded the petition may be inferred from a postscript in a letter of Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, June 16, 1773, — "The enclosed resolves are to be considered by the House this afternoon."

obtained by Temple, his secret died with him. They were addressed to Mr. Whately, a London banker, and brother of a former Secretary of the Treasury. Several persons were suspected of having purloined them; and a dispute on this subject having resulted in a duel between Temple and Whately, Franklin avowed his part in the affair, to prevent further bloodshed. He was bitterly denounced for sending the letters to America, and was dismissed for it sometime afterwards from his office; but he considered that a disclosure of their contents was a debt he owed to his constituents, and the production of the originals necessary to the verification of their contents.¹ Hutchinson had finally become too hateful to his countrymen to be much longer continued in office without injury to the government service, and during the next winter he was recalled to England. For awhile after his arrival he was courted as a rising man and the most reliable authority on American affairs; but, as the objects of his baleful counsels became apparent, he lost all favor at court, and, retiring disgraced, died in mean obscurity, broken down with age, disappointed ambition, and domestic afflictions. But he improved the time yet allotted to him in Massachusetts, to continue his malicious correspondence, which, now that his duplicity was unmasked, he made more venomous than ever.

"I think," said Adams, "enough appears, by these letters, to show that the plan for the ruin of American liberty was laid by a few men, born and educated amongst us, and governed by avarice and a lust of power. Could they be removed from his Majesty's service and confidence here, effectual measures might then be taken to restore *placidam sub libertate quietem*. Perhaps, however, you may think it necessary that *some* on your side the water should be impeached, and brought to condign punishment."²

"The House are now considering the independency of the judges; a matter which every day grows still more furious, and employs

¹ Grahame's History, pp. 475 - 477.

² Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, June 21, 1773.

much of the attention of the people without doors as well as of the members of the House. I wish that Lord Dartmouth and the rest of the great officers of the Crown could be prevailed upon duly to consider that British Americans cannot long endure a state of slavery.”¹

The independency of the judges was discussed in the House, and a series of resolves passed, demanding of those officers whether they were determined to receive the grants of the Assembly or to accept of their support from the Crown, and making it the indispensable duty of the Commons² of the Province to impeach them before the Governor and Council in case of longer delay in their reply. The Court was immediately prorogued after the passage of the resolves recommending an impeachment, and the idea was consummated in the next session by John Adams, who drew up articles to that effect; but though the House of Representatives adopted them, the Council refused their concurrence.³

¹ Adams to Lee, June 28, 1773.

² On this use of the word Commons, see, *ante*, I. 387

³ John Adams's Works, II. 328 - 332.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Ministry resolve to draw a Revenue from America by a Tax upon Tea. — Arrival of the News in Boston. — Excitement throughout the Colonies. — Adams publicly calls for a CONTINENTAL CONGRESS. — His Origination of the Idea. — His Writings and Correspondence on the Subject. — Cushing wishes the Colonists to cease Agitation, and bear with the Public Grievances. — Adams points out the Danger of Concession, and continues to urge a Convention of the Thirteen States. — He foresees the coming Republic, and advocates an American Commonwealth. — Exchanges Sentiments with Hawley. — Tireless Energy of Adams in the Public Cause. — He Drafts a Circular Letter to the other Assemblies. — The Governor continues to denounce him to the Ministry as the Arch Leader and Manager of the Legislature.

SEEING how effectively their successive measures for exacting a tribute from the Colonies had been frustrated, the government now determined to enforce the old act, levying an impost upon tea. They believed that a stroke of policy would accomplish what no amount of constraint had thus far enabled them to effect. Disregarding the counsels of the wisest statesmen in England, and heedless of the moderate, though resolute course of the Colonists themselves, whose character and intentions were persistently misconceived, the Ministry resolved to try the temper of the people still further. The result of the act had been only to encourage the smuggling of tea from Holland and other countries, which all the vigilance of the government could not wholly prevent, while the regular exports from England had so decreased that seventeen millions of pounds had accumulated in the warehouses of the East India Company in London. To relieve the Company, and at the same time to increase the revenue by a revival of trade, a bill was introduced into Parliament authorizing them to export tea to all places free of duty. It was expected that although a heavy duty was levied on the

article after its arrival in America, yet it would find ready purchasers in the Colonies, as the company could sell it cheaper than at any previous time. Before the passage of the act the Company had proposed that government should remove the tariff of threepence upon the pound, retaining sixpence as an export duty. Had this plan been adopted, it might have cleared the way for a reconciliation, and American independence have been retarded; but the policy of forcing the Colonies into unconditional obedience had not been abandoned, and the idea was rejected.¹ When the Revenue Act passed in 1767, the abstract right of taxation, rather than any immediate income, was the motive; the hope of revenue, however, had some weight, and now the proposed enforcement was for a while regarded as a certain expedient to draw moneys from America. It was Lord North who conceived this project, and in May the act was passed by a large majority.

When this news reached Boston, it convinced the patriots that a crisis was approaching. A few months only would elapse before the tea-laden ships would arrive. Samuel Adams, as the danger grew more imminent, nerved himself to encounter it, and still held to union as the watchword. The Boston Committee of Correspondence was now in the height of its activity. It was an all-powerful institution, having the unbounded confidence of the people, and responding to their trust by unwearying efforts to preserve a singleness of purpose among all the towns. The contemplated enforcement of the tea duty, the most wily and dangerous, as it was the best planned of all the measures of government, being a blow aimed at the whole, Adams saw that the time for a Continental Congress had arrived. This

¹ The plan seems to have been first suggested in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (January, 1773; XLIII. 20), where it is proposed to take off the three pence per pound on importation to America, which would greatly increase the consumption there, and give the East India Company a monopoly of the American tea trade.

he conceived was not an idea to be held in reserve, but to be put into immediate execution.¹ Towards this point he had been aiming for two years past. In the fall of 1771, he had recommended a meeting of the Colonies, by their deputies, to correspond with a similar organization in London, to promote a union throughout America.² The idea, he said, dropped suddenly from his pen, but it did not cease to occupy his mind, for we find him again alluding to it in his answer to the Governor's speech in January, 1773, where he asserts that the consent of all the Colonies in Congress would be necessary for the establishment of a line of distinction between the supreme authority of Parliament and total independence.³ A member of a Connecticut Committee of Correspondence, Samuel H. Parsons, afterwards a major-general in the Continental army, wrote to Samuel Adams in March of this year, proposing "an annual meeting of commissioners from the Colonies to consult on their general welfare."⁴ "I have only time," he adds, "to suggest the thoughts to you, who I know can improve more on the subject than is in my power, had I time." Dr. Church, in his March oration, had also predicted "some future Congress as the glorious source of the salvation of America." But Adams had long pondered over the subject, and only awaited the judicious moment for putting it in practice. Caution had restrained him (until the Governor's speech in January) from hinting at it in his public writings as a positive legislative proposition; for until a Colonial combination could be effected, by means of his cherished idea of committees of correspondence, it would only jeopardize the cause to suggest a measure for which the public mind was not prepared, and could not be until the way had been cleared by the

¹ See Bancroft, VI. 465, 466.

² Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, Sept. 27, 1771.

³ Bradford's State Papers, p. 364.

⁴ Allen's American Biog. Dictionary, *art.* "Parsons." *Historical Magazine*, March, 1855; II. 88, 89. Lossing's Field Book, 1855, I. 742.

committees. All these contingencies were carefully studied, and the consecutive manner in which he developed his plans, shows how perfectly he understood the character of his countrymen and his own purposes. But even the hint of a Congress as early as the last winter, was sufficient to awaken the anxiety of Arthur Lee, who, on reading the reply to the Governor's speech, immediately wrote back to his friend dissuading him from the scheme.

"You have with great propriety mentioned, in your answer to the Governor's first speech, that the drawing a line being an arduous undertaking and of general concernment, you would not attempt it without a general Congress. Of the justice of this I am clear, but doubtful of its policy. I cannot help thinking that the leading men in each Assembly, communicating with one another, would form a plan more wise and well considered than could be expected from a public body. And there would be no danger of effectual opposition to it in the different Assemblies, when the time came in which they could demand a ratification of it from this country, with assurance of success. My great objection to a public Congress is, that it will arouse this country, and perhaps incense her to some hostile measure. The only contention in which we are unequal to her is in that of arms. It is not wise policy, therefore, to provoke this issue of the dispute, if our purpose can be accomplished without it. For with all her ill usage, Britain is still our mother country."¹

But Samuel Adams had already addressed Lee fully on this project, and, the next week after the above was written, the letter arrived, in which Adams so plainly set forth the advantages likely to ensue from such a convention, that Lee replied at once:—

"Since my last to you, I have received your last two favors, for which I cannot express how much I am obliged to you. I have reconsidered what I then wrote you touching the policy of a Congress, and I am happy in retracting my opinion, upon a full con-

¹ Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, June 11, 1773. Hutchinson seems to have relished the proposition no better. See his letter to Lord Dartmouth, Sept. 23, 1773.

viction that you are wiser and better able to judge of what is proper in this business than I can possibly be.”¹

The letter referred to has unfortunately been lost, and we can only judge by inference of the arguments of its author. To reach Lee as it did, between the 11th and 23d of June, and subject to the uncertainty of departure from Boston and the movements at sea of a sailing vessel, it must undoubtedly have been written in April. The idea of a Congress of the Colonies was, in the mind of Samuel Adams, the natural and anticipated consequence of the Committees of Correspondence, both being founded in what to him was the salvation of the country, a firm union of the whole.

“Should the correspondence,” said he, “from Virginia produce a Congress, and then an assembly of States, it would require the head of a very able minister to speak with so respectable a body. This, perhaps, is a mere fiction of the mind of a political enthusiast; ministers of state are not to be disturbed with dreams.”²

The honor of having first proposed a Continental Congress has been claimed for both Samuel Adams and Franklin. In his biographical sketch, written at the death of Adams, from facts within his own knowledge, Judge Sullivan gave it as a common statement, in those times, that he originated a Congress of the Colonies; and continues, “He certainly was the man who proposed it in this State; though Governor Bowdoin and Dr. Franklin were with him in the measure.”³ Of Bowdoin’s participation no other evidence remains. The next allusion to the scheme, after that by Adams in January of this year, is by Benjamin Church in his oration in March,⁴ and probably the idea was considered about that time by others in private circles. It was not until July, that Franklin, writing from London, recommended a Congress to Cush-

¹ A. Lee to S. Adams, June 23, 1773. The letter is erroneously dated “1772” in the Life of Lee.

² S. Adams to A. Lee, April 9, 1773.

³ Sullivan’s Biographic Sketch of the late Gov. Adams, Boston, October, 1803.

⁴ See, *ante*, II. 53.

ing.¹ Both Franklin and Adams had ever kept in view the importance of union. The first had drawn up in 1754, at the Albany Congress, the plan of a federative compact with a Governor-General to be named and supported by the King, and a Grand Council to be triennially elected by the people of the Colonies through their Legislatures. This was long before the Revolution, when America and the mother country were in profound peace, and had for its object mainly the protection of the Colonies against the French. The other, the moment Britain developed her policy, in 1764, of Colonial taxation, had intuitively seen the necessity of an alliance of the Provinces for mutual support and protection, and he first sounded the alarm by directing the Boston Representatives to bring the other North American Colonies to add their weight to that of Massachusetts, "that, by the united applications of all who are aggrieved, all may happily obtain redress."² And, acting upon this basis, the Legislature which met three weeks afterwards, on the motion of James Otis, sent forth a letter to the other Colonies inviting their co-operation; the offspring of which was the New York Congress, "from whose united counsels," in the language of Adams, the town of Boston "had the warmest expectations." In 1766, he had proposed to Christopher Gadsden a union and correspondence among the merchants throughout the continent.³ The Circular Letter of 1768, so alarming to the Ministry, and denounced as tending to create "unwarrantable combinations," and the successive motions for committees of correspondence in 1770, 1771, and 1773, all originated with Adams. Thus the two New-Englanders had equally seen the necessity of union; but when Franklin proposed his scheme, the Colonies had no thought of a combination to preserve their rights as men and subjects from the aggressions of tyranny, nor were any such issues raised for ten years. The Congress proposed by Samuel Adams

¹ Franklin to Cushing, July 7, 1773.

² See, *ante*, I. 48.

³ S. Adams to Christopher Gadsden, Dec. 11, 1766.

was for life and liberty. He began his career as a statesman with a clear perception of the policy of an alliance of counsel for the general safety of the Colonies, and he never abandoned the idea.

The recent news from England left no room for discretion. The disease required vigorous treatment, and a general Congress now seemed indispensable. Adams commenced a series of essays in the Gazette, extending through August and September, in which he held up this measure as the only salvation of the country. Lord Dartmouth had written a private letter to Cushing as the Speaker of the Assembly. Charmed with the "noble and generous sentiments" of the writer, Cushing, who could not, like Adams, separate the Minister from the pious man, yielded to the persuasive reasoning, and advised that the people should for a time bear with their grievances.

"Our natural increase of wealth and population," said he, "will, in a course of years, settle this dispute in our favor; whereas, if we persist in denying the right of Parliament to legislate for us, they may think us extravagant in our demands, and there will be great danger of bringing on a rupture fatal to both countries."

These views he embodied in a letter to Arthur Lee, believing that grievances would be redressed, "if these high points about the supreme authority of Parliament were to fall asleep."¹

Adams made this submissive policy the subject of one of his essays. After commenting upon the wishes which the Minister had expressed for submission and reconciliation, he says:—

"If we will now petition in such a style as his Lordship will call decent and temperate, that is, so as administration shall be able to avail themselves in Parliament in saying that we have, to use their own words, virtually given up our claim, we shall then have every-

¹ Bancroft, VI. 466. Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections, 4th Series, IV. 360–363.

thing else we want, and his Lordship will endeavor that the acknowledged right of Parliament shall never be exercised, except a case of absolute necessity should happen. But who is to be the judge when this case of necessity happens? I fear if these revenue acts should be repealed upon this principle, it would very soon be deemed necessary, by other acts, to give and grant to the King the property of the Colonists again, and enable him to apply it to the purpose of establishing a tyranny over them. His Lordship, I dare say, will not in this case think it safe to pledge himself to the Colonies. If ever another petition should be sent from America, relating to the common rights, it is presumed that it will employ the joint wisdom of the whole, in a Congress, or some other way, conformable to the plan of union proposed by Virginia, and adopted by the Assembly of this and such other Colonies whose Assemblies have had opportunity of meeting since. It certainly would be inconsistent with that plan of union for this or any other Colony to come into a new system of American policy without consulting the whole.

“But why should administration expect any further petitions? Our sentiments and resolutions are sufficiently known to them already. We have spoken without reservation. We scorn to say anything that looks like duplicity or cunning. Our petitions have always been expressed in terms decent and temperate, as well as explicit. If they expect we shall alter our tone with a view of having it thought we have altered our sentiments, when in reality we have not, this is a low artifice which Americans will always despise, and therefore it is highly probable they will find themselves mistaken. Solomon tells us there is a time to speak and a time to be silent; and perhaps it requires as much wisdom to determine the time when as what to speak. Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor, however inconsistent it may be with the maxims of cunning politicians, is a rule which ought to be, and ever will be, regarded by an honest community as well as by every honest individual whenever he speaks at all. It certainly is not a time now for Britain and the Colonies to prevaricate with each other. The matter in controversy is of too serious and important a nature to be trifled with. It will be folly for Britain, and with half an eye she may have discerned it already, to attempt to settle this controversy by mere power and brutal force. If, perchance, it should be

admitted that at present she is powerful, would it not for all this be wiser for her to consider how long she is likely to remain so. America is daily increasing in numbers and consequently in strength; and the balance of power may be shifted before the most sagacious are aware of it. An American politician, who is a mere cunning man, is waiting for this (what he calls) glorious event, in hopes to have the opportunity of acting the same unreasonable part towards Britain for which we are complaining of her. This is a principle directly repugnant to the plan of reconciliation which all profess, and every wise and good man really wishes for. The prospect arising from our rapid increase is indeed flattering, and it offers the strongest reason why we should be watchful over ourselves, lest, for the sake of present peace, we *indirectly*, or *impliably*, or in any manner or way *inadvertently* make the least appearance of receding from our just claim of right. When our liberty is gone, history and experience will teach us that an increase of inhabitants will be but an increase of *slaves*. Let us, then, strive to convince our brethren on the other side the Atlantic that it is in vain for them to expect we shall ever cease to contend for the *full* exercise of our constitutional rights; and at the same time, so far from aiming to be separated from, or disconnected with them, we wish for a plan of union and harmony, upon the principles of equal liberty, which, if possible, shall be lasting as time itself.”¹

By the next opportunity the Governor sent this Gazette to Lord Dartmouth, anxious that the Minister should know what were the views of the man whose counsels and ceaseless energy were more to be feared than the efforts of any other. He says:—

“The body of the people of the Province are far from a perverse disposition. They are deluded by a few men, and even among those few there are some who would wish to see an end to contention upon what they call reasonable terms. But there are others of too great influence, who are against all conciliatory proposals: and if every complaint of grievance should be satisfied, they would immediately make as many more fresh complaints in the place of them. The piece with the signature of “A.,” in the paper I enclose

¹ “A.,” in the Boston Gazette, Sept. 13, 1773.

to your Lordship, speaks the language of the chief man among them, and is generally supposed to be wrote by him. The hint of a Congress is nothing new; it is what they have been aiming at the last two sessions of the General Court; and I have certain intelligence that the Speakers of the Assemblies in several of the Colonies have been invited to join with this Province, and have been assured that the Assembly here are ready to do their part.”¹

Those who “wished to see an end to contention on what they called reasonable terms,” included Cushing, against whose “feeble advice”² Adams used his influence, and persistently combated everything tending to waive the just claim of right on the part of the Colonies. One of Cushing’s letters to Arthur Lee, already alluded to, had advanced this theory of yielding the point in dispute; and Lee, in reply, endeavored to prove to his correspondent the fatal tendency of such a course. Cushing showed this to Adams, who, in his next letter to Lee, reveals, in his guarded, quiet manner, his opinion of his colleague’s politics. He says: —

“May I whisper in your ear that you paid a compliment to the Speaker, when you told him you always spoke under the correction of his better judgment. I admire what you say to him (and I hope it will have a good impression on his mind), *that we shall be respected in England exactly in proportion to the firmness and strength of our opposition.*”³

The sagacity of Adams, and his knowledge of human nature, taught him that however much they might attempt to conciliate the Ministry, by receding from the righteous principles of liberty, the act would be only regarded as an admission of their inability to maintain their cause on constitutional grounds, and a dread of the consequences of persisting in the dispute. The first step in retreat would be the signal of defeat. No part of the general plan could

¹ Hutchinson to Lord Dartmouth, Sept. 23, 1773.

² Bancroft, VI. 466.

³ Adams to Lee, April 4, 1774.

be abandoned, without destroying the whole. Revolutions never go backward. The theory of union by correspondence among the Colonies was established ; but to reduce it to practice there must be a meeting of delegates from each, where resistance would be united and systematic. Had the Americans followed the advice of Cushing and others of the like policy, the Revolution must have proved a failure, for success could only be attained by determination in a fixed purpose, to be accomplished not by one Colony, but by a confederacy of the whole thirteen. Adams saw in each new act of aggression additional light and encouragement for the grand object of his life ; and as he speculated upon the wonderful future of America, he still urged a Congress as the first step towards its realization.

“The very important dispute,” said he, “between Britain and America has, for a long time, employed the pens of statesmen in both countries, but no plan of union is yet agreed on between them ; the dispute still continues, and everything floats in uncertainty. As I have long contemplated the subject with fixed attention, I beg leave to offer a proposal to my countrymen, viz. that a CONGRESS OF AMERICAN STATES be assembled as soon as possible ; draw up a Bill of Rights, and publish it to the world ; choose an ambassador to reside at the British Court to act for the united Colonies ; appoint where the Congress shall annually meet, and how it may be summoned upon any extraordinary occasion, what further steps are to be taken, &c.

“The expense of an annual Congress would be very trifling, and the advantages would undoubtedly be great ; in this way the wisdom of the continent might, upon all important occasions, be collected and operate for the interest of the whole people. Nor may any one imagine this plan, if carried into execution, will injure Great Britain ; for it will be the most likely way to bring the two countries to a right understanding, and to settle matters in dispute advantageously for both. So sensible are the people of America that they are in possession of a fine country and other superior advantages,—their rapid increase and growing importance,—it cannot be thought they will ever give up their claim to *equal liberty* with any

other people on earth ; but rather, as they find their power perpetually increasing, look for greater perfection in just liberty and government than other nations or even Britain ever enjoyed. As the Colonies are blessed with the richest treasures of nature, art will never be idle for want of stores to work upon ; and they, being instructed by the experience, the wisdom, and even errors of all ages and countries, will undoubtedly rise superior to them all in the scale of human dignity, and give the world new and bright examples of everything which can add lustre to humanity. No people that ever trod the stage of the world have had so glorious a prospect as now rises before the Americans. There is nothing good or great but their wisdom may acquire, and to what heights they will arrive in the progress of time no one can conceive. That Great Britain should continue to *insult* and *alienate* the growing millions who inhabit this country, on whom she greatly depends, and on whose alliance in future time her existence as a nation may be suspended, is perhaps as glaring an instance of human folly as ever disgraced politicians or put common sense to the blush.”¹

Fearing that the dangerous counsels recommending inaction until the Ministry should feel disposed to redress their grievances might find friends in the interior towns, the Boston Committee of Correspondence addressed them, by the hand of Samuel Adams, a Circular Letter, setting forth the advantage of a “Confederacy of the whole continent of America,” and refused to waive the claim of right, which could only divide the Americans in sentiment and confuse their counsels. They urged the town committees not to commit their rights to the tender mercies of the Ministry ; reminded them that watchfulness, unity, and harmony were necessary to the salvation of themselves and posterity from bondage, and expressed “an animating confidence in the Supreme Disposer of events, that he would never suffer a sensible, brave, and virtuous people to be enslaved.”² The most influential man in the interior was Joseph Hawley, one

¹ “Observation,” in the Boston Gazette, Sept. 27, 1773.

² Circular of the Boston Committee of Correspondence, Sept. 21, 1773, quoted in Bancroft, VI. 467.

of the ablest lawyers in the Province, who for years had worked shoulder to shoulder with the "Chief Incendiary" in his legislative measures. Adams addressed him two long letters, in October, on the subject engrossing his thoughts.

"I cannot omit," he says, "this opportunity of submitting to your judgment the ideas I have of the present disposition of the British Administration towards this country; and I the rather do it at this time, because, as matters seem to me to be drawing to a crisis, it is of the greatest importance that we should have a right understanding of their sentiments and designs. The 'wild and extravagant notions,' as they have lately been called, of the supreme authority of Parliament, flowing from the pen of our House of Representatives, has greatly chagrined them, as they apprehend it has been the means of awakening that spirit of opposition to their measures which, from the information their tools on this side the water had given them, and the confidence they had placed in the art and address of Mr. Hutchinson, they had flattered themselves had subsided, and would soon be extinguished. . . . Some of our politicians would have the people believe the administration are disposed or determined to have all the grievances which we complain of redressed, if we will only be quiet; but this, I apprehend, would be a fatal delusion; for I have the best assurances that, if the King himself should make any concessions, or take any steps contrary to the right of Parliament to tax us, he would be in danger of embroiling himself with the Ministry; and that, under the present prejudices of all about him, even the recalling an instruction to the Governor is not yet likely to be advised."

Again, to the same person, after a review of political affairs, and hazarding some speculations upon the probable issue of events in both continents, he says:—

"But nothing, I think, will be so dangerous as for the Americans to withdraw their dependence upon themselves, and place it upon those whose constant endeavor, for ten years past, has been to enslave us; and who, if they can obtain a new election of old members, it is to be feared, unless we keep a perpetual watchfulness, will in another seven years effect their designs. The safety of the Americans, in my humble opinion, depends upon their pursuing

their wise plan of union in principle and conduct. If we persevere in asserting our rights, the time must come, probably a time of war, when our just claims will be attended to and our complaints regarded; but if we discover the least disposition to submit ourselves to their decision, it is my opinion that our injuries will be increased tenfold.”¹

If Hawley replied, the answers have not been preserved. But there can scarcely be a doubt that he perfectly coincided with his friend, and used the same arguments in Western Massachusetts to support union and a determined action, if the weak policy of submission found any advocates there. Adams followed up the subject again in the *Gazette*.

“No one can doubt,” he says, “but there are some good men in the two Houses of Parliament, but, at the same time, it must be extremely irrational in us to place any dependence upon them; for if they are not able to stop the progress of despotism in Britain, where they reside, we may not imagine they can restore the liberties of America. We know that the British Parliament stands *impeached* by its constituents, and that numerous petitions from the best part of the people in the kingdom have been presented to the Throne for a dissolution of it, charging said Parliament (and supporting their charge) with tyranny and many flagrant violations of the rights and liberties of the people; and *now*, what man in his senses will hope for the restoration of American liberties from *such a Parliament*? So much has been written upon the rights of the Colonies, that no man of understanding is ignorantly transgressing against them; therefore Parliament has knowingly and deliberately trampled on the liberties of America; and from such men nothing is to be expected but continued injuries.

“It is then evident, if we have relief, it must come from some other quarter. It must result from the union and determined resolution of the Colonies; they must force their unjust aggressors to comply with the dictates of reason. It will perhaps be readily granted that there is no foundation to hope for redress of our grievances from Parliament. But the question will be asked,—How

¹ Adams to Hawley, Oct. 3 and 13, 1773.

shall the Colonies force their oppressors to proper terms? This question has been often answered already by our politicians: 'Form an independent state,' 'AN AMERICAN COMMONWEALTH.' This plan has been proposed, and I can't find that any other is likely to answer the great purpose of preserving our liberties. I hope, therefore, it will be well digested and forwarded, to be in due time put into execution, unless our political fathers can secure American liberties in some other way. As the population, wealth, and power of this continent are swiftly increasing, we certainly have no cause to doubt of our success in maintaining liberty by forming a commonwealth, or whatever measure wisdom may point out for the preservation of the rights of America."¹

In whatever direction the search is pursued, the tireless energy and indomitable purpose of Adams is apparent. His genius seems to have been all-pervading. A bare rehearsal of his actions, with simply the comments necessary to explain them, in consecutive order, must seem like panegyric, from their very importance and results. Yet silent memorials of his constant activity, which letters and public documents alone unfold to curious investigation, can only bring his shadow before the posterity for whose happiness he toiled. We survey these pieces of the shattered statue, and can but deplore the carelessness which leaves us to imagine the figure by their character. The remnants fortunately preserved from a fate which had swept away the greater portion, and was fast destroying all, might afford to an inventive mind probable theories for narrative biography, which would serve to reproduce the original with sufficient accuracy. But whoever studies the great plan of the American struggle, and seeks to comprehend its gradual development upon the basis of reason and calm judgment, may supply from its documents what is lacking for the illustration of character in its minor details. To such an observer, the papers of this period are so many pictures, full of significance, and peopled in every line with the moving

¹ "Z," in the Boston Gazette, Oct. 11, 1773.

spirit of the time. We conjure up, without difficulty, the scenes at the popular meetings in Faneuil Hall and the Old South, and at the Committees of Correspondence, the earnest debates in the Legislature, the objections of the timid and hesitating, and the overpowering will of the more resolute. We imagine the conferences of the Governor and his confidential friends in the Province-House; the discussions on popular rights in the clubs and the family circles of Boston; the scenes in the streets, the equipages, the peculiar character of the New England people; the amusements, tastes, manner of living, and dress of that day; and fancy presents an interminable succession of groups, embracing the entire routine of life. But a strict adherence to actual occurrences, in portraying a series of political events, as illustrated in the actions of one or a few men, if taken as a rule at the outset, leaves little space for the ideal.

The character of Samuel Adams is best shown in his political works, and a plain statement of facts places him before us, without the assistance of inferential narrative. Had a Boswell existed to record the daily sayings of Adams, nothing extraordinary would be found in them, save the wisdom and foresight which he displayed in conversation, as well as in his public measures. But he never studied effect. What he had to say was to the point, plainly expressed, and uttered with the same earnestness which appears in his writings. He never attempted flights of fancy or oratorical display, and appealed, both with his pen and in public debate, to the reason rather than to the imagination of those whom he addressed. Of his speeches few specimens have been preserved, and it is by his writings almost exclusively that posterity must judge of his opinions on all important matters. No amount of labor seemed capable of exhausting him; no limit could be placed to his capacity for work. And by a life of regularity, as far as the nature of his pursuits would permit, and the strictest temperance, he prolonged his powers for many years beyond the space commonly allotted to man.

Having thrown abroad among the people of Massachusetts, by private letters, circulars, and essays in the Gazette, his ideas of union, and urged a resolute policy to meet the approaching danger, he again turned his attention to the other Colonies, feeling assured that his own Province might be counted on with absolute certainty. The intercolonial Committee of Correspondence appointed by the House of Representatives was in organization, but as yet few if any documents had passed between that body and the other Committees. Adams procured a meeting, and prepared a Circular Letter to the Committees of the sister Colonies.¹ It was essential that Cushing, the Speaker of the House, who was nominally chairman of the Massachusetts Committee, should appear in the Circular, and he was brought into the measure by Adams, who obtained his signature to the paper, though, as we have seen, he had been opposed to its expressed policy. The original, rough draft, in Adams's handwriting, is extant. The Circular first calls attention to the nature of the intercolonial institution, and then points out the menacing aspect of affairs, — the prorogation of Parliament, without taking the least notice of American grievances; the King's resolute answer to the prayer of the Massachusetts petition, avowing his intention to support the authority of Parliament in the Provinces; and the accumulating evidences that the Ministry were determined to prosecute the revenue acts. It then continues: —

“Such being still the temper of the British Ministry, such the disposition of the Parliament of Britain, under their direction, to consider themselves the *sovereign of America*, is it not of the utmost importance that our vigilance should increase, that the Colonies should be united in their sentiments of the measures of opposition necessary to be taken by them, and that in whichsoever of the Col

¹ Bancroft, VI. 469. Barry's Massachusetts, II. 467. “Samuel Adams, whose vigorous intellect overpowered opposition, persuaded even Cushing to act as one of a select committee to prepare a circular to be sent to the other Colonies to join with Massachusetts in resisting the designs of the English Ministry and preventing the landing of teas in their ports.”

onies any of the infringements are, or shall be, made on the common rights of all, that Colony should have the mutual efforts of all for its support. This we take to be the true design of the establishment of our Committees of Correspondence.

“There is one thing that appears to us to be an object worthy the immediate attention of the Colonies. Should a war take place, which is thought by many to be near at hand, America will then be viewed by Administration in a light of importance to Great Britain.¹ Her aid will be deemed necessary; her friendship, therefore, will perhaps be even courted. Would it not be the highest wisdom in the several American Assemblies absolutely to withhold all kinds of aid in a general war, until the rights and liberties *which they ought to enjoy* are restored and secured to them upon the most permanent foundation? This has always been the usage of a spirited House of Commons in Britain, and upon the best grounds; for certainly security and protection ought to be the unalterable condition, when supplies are called for. With regard to the extent of rights which the Colonies ought to insist upon, it is a subject which requires the closest attention and deliberation, and this is a strong reason why it should claim the earliest consideration of at least every Committee, in order that we may be prepared, when time and circumstances shall give to our claim the surest prospect of success. And when we consider how one great event has hurried on upon the back of another, such a time may come, and such circumstances take place, sooner than we are aware of. There are certain rights which every Colony has explicitly asserted, and which we trust they will never give up. *That*, in particular, that they have the sole and unalienable right to give and grant their own money, and appropriate it to such purposes as they judge proper, is justly deemed to be of the last importance. But whether even this subject, so essential to our freedom and happiness, can remain secure to us while a right is claimed by the British Parliament to make laws binding upon us in all cases whatever, you will certainly consider with seriousness. It should be debasing to us, after so manly a struggle for our rights, to be contented with a mere temporary relief.”

¹ This idea of Britain's dependence upon America, in some future time of war, seems to have frequently occupied the mind of Mr. Adams. See his essays in the Boston Gazette and his letter to Hawley, Oct. 13, 1773.

The legislative controversy of the last session was enclosed with the Circular, from which only an extract has been given, and it was suggested that, as some other Colony might be called into a similar discussion, an interchange of arguments would be beneficial.

"We are far from desiring," thus the paper concludes, "that the connection between Britain and America should be broken. *Esto perpetua* is our ardent wish, but upon the terms only of equal liberty. If we cannot establish an agreement upon these terms, let us leave it to another and a wiser generation. But it may be worth consideration, that the work is more likely to be well done at a time when the ideas of liberty and its importance are strong in men's minds. There is danger that these ideas may grow faint and languid. Our posterity may be accustomed to bear the yoke, and being inured to servility, they may even bow the shoulder to the burden. It can never be expected that a people, however *numerous*, will form and execute as wise plans to perpetuate their liberty, when they have lost the spirit and feeling of it.

"We cannot close without mentioning a fresh instance of the temper and designs of the British Ministry; and that is, allowing the East India Company, with a view of pacifying them, to ship their teas to America. It is easy to see how aptly this scheme will serve to destroy the trade of the Colonies and increase the revenue. How necessary, then, is it, that each Colony should take effectual methods to prevent this measure from having its designed effects."¹

The Circular was unanimously adopted by the Committee, and a postscript was added, requesting that it should not be made public, as its object might otherwise be counteracted by the common enemies of the Colonies.

For a few months past, the Governor had found but little else to do than to witness helplessly the gradual advances of the people towards that union which the Ministry so dreaded. His defeat in the legislative controversy, and the odium which the exposure of his letters had brought upon his head, had

¹ Original draft of the Circular Letter of the Committee of Correspondence of the House to the other Colonies. Signed by Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, and William Heath, Oct. 21, 1773.

lessened his influence in England; and as he had received no endorsement of his course for several months, but rather intimations that his having raised the issue of Parliamentary authority was disapproved by the government, his letters grew less frequent. Dwarfed to mean proportions as a politician, anticipating his recall, and fearful of being left without his usual public emoluments, he solicited the office of Postmaster, held by Franklin, and looked forward with gloomy apprehensions as to how he should be received on his arrival. Overthrown in all his schemes for the aggrandizement of himself and family, he turned to the principal agent of his troubles, and, as he noted the continued and systematic approaches of Adams towards American Independence, he addressed a private letter to Lord Dartmouth, with the view of fully establishing in that nobleman's mind the true position of the several leaders, and the overruling influence of the master spirit.

“Permit me, my Lord, in a private letter to acquaint your Lordship more particularly with the state of the Province than would be convenient in a public letter. It must be allowed that the people, in general, are possessed with a jealousy that it has been the design of Administration in England to enslave them, as they term it, or to subject their liberties and property to the arbitrary disposal of a power in which they have not any choice, and over which they cannot, be the issues what they may, have any control. There are many, however, and more would appear if they dared, of the most sensible part of the community who know and declare that the jealousies are groundless, and that they were raised and cultivated by artful, designing men. The conductors of the people are divided in sentiment; some of them professing that they only aim to denounce the innovations since the Stamp Act, or, as they sometimes say, since the expiration of the war (for they are not always the same); and though they don't think Parliament has a just authority, yet they are willing to acquiesce, since it has been so long submitted to. Others declare they will be altogether independent, but would maintain an alliance with Great Britain. Each stands in need of the other, and their mutual interest is sufficient to connect them to-

gether. Of the first sort, the Speaker of the House ¹ often declares himself; so does a clergyman of Boston,² who has great influence in our political measures; and so do some of the Council, who have most influence there.

"Those of the latter opinion have for their head one of the members of Boston, who was the first person that openly, in any public assembly, declared for absolute independence, and who, from a natural obstinacy of temper, and from many years' practice in politics, is perhaps as well qualified to excite the people to any extravagance in theory or practice as any person in America. From large defalcations, as collector of taxes for the town of Boston,³ and other acts in pecuniary matters, his influence was small until within these seven years; but since that, it has been gradually increasing, until he has obtained such an ascendancy as to direct the town of Boston and the House of Representatives, and consequently the Council, just as he pleases. A principle has been avowed by some who are attached to him, the most inimical that can be devised, that in political matters the public good is above all other considerations; and every rule of morality, when in competition with it, may very well be dispensed with. Upon this principle, the whole proceedings, with respect to the letters of the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, of which he was the chief conductor, has been vindicated. In ordinary affairs, the counsels of the whole opposition unite. Whenever there appears a disposition to any conciliatory measures, this person, by his art and skill, prevents any effect; sometimes by exercising his talents in the newspapers, an instance of which is supposed to have been given in the paper enclosed to your Lordship in my letter, number twenty-seven, at other times by an open opposition, and this sometimes in the House, where he has defeated every attempt as often as any has been made. But his chief dependence is upon a Boston town meeting, where he originates his measures, which are

¹ Thomas Cushing.

² Andrew Eliot?

³ Reference is here made to the uncollected taxes in the year 1763-64, when the distresses of the town made it impossible for many poor tax-payers to meet the demands against them. Mr. Adams, as was frequently the case with other tax collectors, had been unable to collect the town's dues, and was held responsible until released by the unanimous vote of the inhabitants. The subject is treated more fully on pages 35-41 of the previous volume, and in Drake's History of Boston, I. 719.

followed by the rest of the towns, and of course are adopted or justified by the Assembly. In a late session, I endeavored to remove the difficulty about the agency, and intimated to many of the members that I would make no objection to the person they had chosen their special agent nor to any other respectable persons for one or two years only. There seemed to be a general disposition to it, but the motion in the House was opposed by this person,¹ who rather inclined to have no agent, neither general nor special, nor was either one or the other appointed.

"I could mention to your Lordship many instances of the like kind. To his influence it has been chiefly owing, that when there has been a repeal of acts of Parliament complained of as grievous, and when any concessions have been made to the Assembly, as the removal of it to Boston and the like (notwithstanding the professions made beforehand by the moderate part of the opposition, that such measures would quiet the minds of the people), he has had art enough to improve them to raise the people higher by assuring them, if they will but persevere, they may bring the nation to their own terms; and the people are more easily induced to a compliance from the declaration made, that they are assured by one or two gentlemen in England, on whose judgment they can depend, that nothing more than a firm adhesion to their demands is necessary to obtain a compliance with every one of them. Could he have been made dependent, I am not sure that he might not have been taken off by an appointment to some public civil office. But, as the Constitution of the Province is framed, such an appointment would increase his abilities, if not his disposition to do mischief, for he well

¹ In 1770, the Assembly appointed Dr. Franklin their agent to appear for them at the court of Great Britain. The salary granted to him by the House could not be paid until Governor Hutchinson had consented to the bill passed for that purpose. Samuel Adams alludes to this in the letter of the House to Franklin in June, 1771; and also as "Candidus," in the Boston Gazette, October, 1771. Instructions from the Ministry forbade the Governor to consent to a salary for any agent at court unless the appointee suited the views of his Excellency. Such an order would of course have forever excluded Franklin. The Governor also refused his assent in July, 1771, to the grants of the two Houses to Deberdt and Bollan, who had long acted as agents of the Assembly. Adams was one of a committee to prepare a remonstrance against this grievance. The paper is found in the Journal of the House for July, 1771; and in Bradford's State Papers, p. 308.

knows that I have not a Council which in any case would consent to his removal, and nobody can do more than he to prevent my ever having such a Council." ¹

This lets us into the inner temple of the secret diplomatic correspondence of that day. The Governor could have put nothing on record more absolutely indicative of the all-powerful influence of the great leader. A volume could not have said more. And yet this information from the highest authority in New England, was intended to be used for the destruction of Adams; for it was doubtless this letter, and others of a similar nature, which induced the Ministry to single him out, a few months afterwards, for sacrifice, as the principal offender among the patriots.

¹ Hutchinson to Lord Dartmouth, Oct. 9, 1773, marked "Private."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Agents appointed for the East India Company. — Efforts to force them to resign. — The Committee of Correspondence assume the direction of Public Affairs. — Adams drafts a Circular Letter to the other Towns, asking their Co-operation. — Arrival of the Tea-Ships. — Town Meetings at Faneuil Hall and the Old South. — Adams's Resolution to send the Tea back to England. — Ineffectual Efforts to obtain a Clearance for the Ships. — Memorable Town Meeting. — The Committee make their Last Appeal. — A Winter Evening in the Old South. — The Governor finally refuses a Pass. — Adams gives the Signal. — **DESTRUCTION OF THE TEA.** — Political Importance of the Event. — Effect on the Revolution. — Conspiracies against the Committee. — Mutual Pledge of the Members.

As in the other Colonies, Commissioners had been appointed in Boston to act as agents for the East India Company. Active opposition commenced in Philadelphia, where, on the 18th of October, resolutions were adopted against the duty on tea, and requesting the agents of the Company to resign, which in a few days they did. In Boston this example was followed, and notices were left on the night of the 1st of November at the door of each one of the agents, summoning them to appear at Liberty Tree on the following Wednesday to resign their commissions.¹ The meeting was called together by the ringing of church bells for an hour before noon, and by the public crier, who announced it at the top of his voice. The following notice was posted about town.


¹ As the tea ships were sailing from England, Arthur Lee wrote to Samuel Adams (Oct. 13, 1773): "The introduction of the tea ought, I think, to be opposed. I enclose you a letter on that subject. The confidence with which the least appearance of safety inspires cowards should make us cautious in permitting Administration to succeed in any of their measures. The commodity may, under this manœuvre, come cheaper to the consumer, the merchants' commission, &c., being avoided; but whatever touches our liberties should, under every temptation, be shunned. Besides, when once they have fixed the trade upon us, they will find ways enough to enhance the price. But I rest in your wisdom."

TO THE FREEMEN OF THIS AND THE NEIGHBORING TOWNS.

GENTLEMEN, — You are desired to meet at the Liberty Tree this day at twelve o'clock at noon, then and there to hear the persons to whom the tea shipped by the East India Company is consigned make a public resignation of their offices as consignees upon oath ; and also swear that they will reship any teas that may be consigned to them by the said Company, by the first sailing vessel to London.

O. C., Sec'y.

BOSTON, November 3, 1773.

 Show me the man that dare take this down !

Adams, Hancock, and Phillips, the selectmen, and William Cooper, the town clerk, with about five hundred more, gathered on the appointed day, November 3d ; but as the consignees did not make their appearance, Molineux and Warren and a body of the people proceeded to Clark's warehouse, where all the agents were assembled, and Molineux acted as spokesman in the parley which ensued. To the demand which he made, by a written paper, that they should promise not to sell the teas, but return them to England, they gave a point blank and insolent refusal. The people would probably then have proceeded to violence, had not Molineux dissuaded.¹

A town meeting was held on the 5th, to consider the report that the East India Company were about shipping their teas to this and the other Colonies, — a political plan of the British Administration to establish and fix the tribute laid upon the importation of that article. During the debate some of the Tories were engaged in circulating a number of printed handbills, called the "Tradesman's Protest," against the proceedings of the merchants on this subject of the tea importations. The meeting was a public one, though called for a special purpose ; and the interference was not only met with the spirit of perfect toleration, but the regular pro-

¹ Bancroft, VI. 474.

ceedings were stopped, and, on motion, one of these papers was read aloud by Paxton, who had been seen distributing them in King Street the day before. After the reading, without comment, and giving the document the benefit of the last hearing, the tradesmen present were desired to collect themselves at the south side of the Hall, when the question was put to them, whether they acknowledged the "Tradesman's Protest," and the whole number, amounting to at least four hundred, voted in the negative.¹ The paper, and Paxton and others who had circulated it, as well as its printer, were then denounced as false, base, and scandalous. This unanimous vote was a finishing stroke to the "Protest," about which nothing was ever heard again.

The substance of the eight resolves which had passed in Philadelphia was now adopted after debate, and a committee was appointed to request the agents or factors to resign their appointments. An additional resolve having been passed to prevent the sale of the teas, the meeting adjourned until afternoon, when the committee reported that the factors could not give answer until Monday, some of their companions, whom they desired to consult in the business, being in Milton. Upon this, it was unanimously voted that Samuel Adams, Molineux, and Dr. Warren be a committee to visit Messrs. Clarke, Faneuil, and Winslow, those of the tea commissioners said to be in town, and acquaint them that, as they were not joint factors of the East India Company with the Hutchinsons, (father and son, who were among the agents,) it was supposed they could determine for themselves, and therefore it was the expectation of the town that they would return an immediate answer to the message. The committee soon reported that an answer might be expected in half an hour, and that Mr. Winslow was not in town.² Hancock, Pitts, Samuel Adams, and Dr. Warren were then made

¹ Votes and Proceedings of the Freeholders, etc., Nov. 5 and 18, 1773 (published by order of the town), p. 4.

² Boston Town Records, November, 1773.

a committee to repair to Milton, and acquaint the two sons of Hutchinson with the request of the town, that they would immediately resign. Soon after, a letter was received from Clarke, Faneuil, and Winslow, replying that they were not yet able to give a definite answer. The letter was read, and voted "unsatisfactory," and the meeting adjourned to the next day.

It was evident that the consignees were vacillating between greed and fear, and delayed action with the hope of some change in public affairs favorable to their intentions. But the determination of the people was not to be evaded by any subterfuge. The committee had inquired on the previous evening at Elisha Hutchinson's house in Boston, where they ascertained that the persons they sought were at Milton, at the country-seat of the Governor. On Saturday morning, having called again at the house, without meeting the objects of their search, they rode out to Milton, and applying at the Governor's residence, were informed that only Elisha Hutchinson had lodged there the last night, and that he had set out early that morning for Boston. Resolved to accomplish their purpose, they returned to town, and calling at his house, found that he had again given them the slip, and gone back to Milton. But the other brother was found at home, and to him the vote of the town on the preceding day was read.¹ He promised a reply in a quarter of an hour, within which time it was sent to the town meeting, which had now convened again at Faneuil Hall. The answer acknowledged that he and his brother had been notified of their appointment as consignees of the tea, and that, in case they were made factors, they would be sufficiently informed to answer the request of the town. The meeting upon this voted the answer "not satisfactory," and the reply of Clarke, Faneuil, and Winslow "daringly affrontive to the town." Just before the adjournment, a vote of thanks was moved to Hancock, the chairman, but it was opposed both by himself

¹ Boston Town Records, November, 1773.

and Adams, and the precedent then and there established, "that a vote of thanks should only be given upon very especial and signal services performed for the public."¹ It was evidently no time for passing compliments. Every man was expected to do his whole duty to his country, for which no one should look for thanks, which might imply some obligation on the part of the people. Nothing could more plainly indicate the unalterable determination to defeat this most atrocious of all the tyrannical acts of government.

The leaders frequently met in the room over Edes and Gill's printing-office, to consult upon measures, and it was probably here that the plot was arranged which was carried out in the middle of the next month. So perfectly was the secret kept ever after, that no clew can be obtained to the origin of what followed, but it is scarcely possible that the destruction of the tea was hastily decided upon. More likely the act had been arranged several weeks beforehand, and perhaps a secret organization, to be disguised as Indians at the decisive moment, was even now formed in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia; for on the 5th of November, in New York, "the Mohawks" were in readiness, should an attempt be made there to land the expected cargo.² What secret pledges were made in Boston among those who were admitted to the secret counsels of the master spirits can never be known. Nearly five weeks before the decisive day, Samuel Adams sent Arthur Lee the Boston Gazette, containing the proceedings of the town meetings of the 5th and 6th of November.

"I have but just time," he writes, "to enclose you a newspaper, by which you will see that Lord Sh——ne [Shelburne] was not mistaken when he said, that 'things began to wear a very serious aspect in this part of the world.' I wish that Lord Dartmouth would believe that the people here begin to think that they have borne oppression long enough, and that, if he has a plan of recon-

¹ Town Records, November, 1773.

² I. Q. Leake's Life of Gen. John Lamb, p. 80.

ciliation, he would produce it without delay ; but his Lordship must know that it must be such as will satisfy Americans. One cannot foresee events ; but from all the observations I am able to make, my next letter will not be upon a trifling subject.”¹

A fast sailing vessel arrived on the 17th from London, having on board one of the East India factors, and bringing the news that the tea-ships had actually sailed, and might soon be expected. The next day a meeting was held, when a committee of citizens, including Samuel Adams, again applied to the several tea consignees, to know if they would resign their commissions, to which they replied that, though they had not yet received any order from the Company, their friends in England had entered into penal engagements in their behalf, merely of a commercial nature, which put it out of their power to comply with the request of the town. This answer, like the other, was voted “not satisfactory,” and the meeting was instantly dissolved without a word of debate. An undefined terror seized upon the consignees at the ominous silence of this breaking up. There was no debate, not a word pro or con, only the vote to dissolve, and it is so briefly recorded in the “town book.”² The time for threatening harangues and prudent discussions was at an end. The town could do no more, and the affair was finally placed in the keeping of the Committee of Correspondence. The Council, who were petitioned by the consignees to take charge of the teas, refused to act, and the applicants were left to take their own course, when some of them withdrew to Castle William.

The Committee now despatched invitations to those of the four principal surrounding towns, to assemble at the Selectmen’s Chamber at Faneuil Hall, where, upon meeting, it was unanimously voted to use their united influence to prevent the landing and sale of the teas, and a joint letter from this body was sent to all the other towns in the Province, placing

¹ Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, Nov. 9, 1773.

² Town Records for November, 1773.

the case plainly before them, and asking their advice. This circular, which was written by Samuel Adams, and bears the signature of the faithful William Cooper, thus concludes:—

“ But if we are prevailed upon implicitly to acknowledge a right to tax us, by receiving and consuming teas loaded with a tax imposed by the British Parliament, we may be assured that, in a very short time, taxes of the like or a more grievous nature will be laid on every article exported from Great Britain, which our necessity may require, or our shameful luxury may betray us into the use of; and when once they have found the way to rob us, their avarice will never be satisfied until our own manufactures, and even our land, purchased and cultivated by our hard laboring ancestors, are taxed to support the vices and extravagance of wretches whose vileness ought to banish them from the society of men. We think therefore, gentlemen, that we are in duty bound to use our most strenuous endeavors to ward off the impending evil, and we are sure that, upon a fair and cool inquiry into the nature and tendency of this ministerial plan, you will think this tea now coming to us more to be dreaded than plague or pestilence; for these can only destroy our mortal bodies, but we never knew a country enslaved without the destruction of their virtue, the loss of which every good man must esteem infinitely greater than the loss of life. And we earnestly request that, after having carefully considered this important matter, you would impress upon the minds of your friends, neighbors, and fellow-townsmen the necessity of exerting themselves in a most zealous and determined manner, to save the present and future generations from temporal, and we think we may with seriousness say, eternal destruction.”

To this, Mr. Adams added a postscript, stating some further particulars as coming more directly from the parent committee, and fully exposing “ the black design upon their liberties,” “ to drain their cash for the support of their enemies on this and the other side of the water in luxury and debauchery.”

“ Now, brethren,” he concludes, “ we are reduced to this dilemma, either to sit down quiet under this and every other burden

that our enemies shall see fit to lay upon us as good-natured slaves, or rise and resist this and every other plan laid for our destruction, as becomes wise freemen. In this extremity we earnestly request your advice, and that you would give us the earliest intelligence of the sense your several towns have of the present gloomy situation of our affairs."¹

On Sunday, the 28th, the Dartmouth sailed up the harbor, and came to anchor near the Castle, with one hundred and fourteen chests of tea. Despite the rigid New England observance of the Sabbath, the Committee, who saw that no time was to be lost, met at once, and obtained from Rotch, the owner of the vessel, a promise not to enter his ship until Tuesday. Samuel Adams was then authorized to invite the Committees of Dorchester, Roxbury, Brookline, Cambridge, and Charlestown, to bring their own townsmen to hold a mass meeting with those of Boston on the next morning.² The message was sent, and, responsive to the call, thousands flocked in from all directions.

On Monday morning, the 29th, the following placard appeared : —

"FRIENDS! BRETHREN! COUNTRYMEN!

"That worst of plagues, the detested TEA, shipped for this port by the East India Company, is now arrived in this harbor. The hour of destruction or manly opposition to the machinations of tyranny stares you in the face. Every friend to his country, to himself, and posterity is now called upon to meet at Faneuil Hall at nine o'clock THIS DAY (at which time the bells will ring), to make a united and successful resistance to this last, worst, and most destructive measure of Administration."³

At the hour appointed, the inhabitants gathered at the "Cradle of Liberty." The meeting soon swelled into the

¹ Circular to all the towns in the Province from the joint Committees of Boston, Dorchester, Brookline, and Roxbury, dated Boston, Nov. 23, 1773.

² Bancroft, VI. 477, 478.

³ Boston Gazette, Monday, Nov. 29, 1773.

largest ever known in Boston, and, as the Gazette says, was "for the purpose of consulting, advising, and determining upon the most proper and effectual method to prevent the unloading, receiving, or vending of the detestable TEA." Jonathan Williams was chosen Moderator, and the business of the meeting was conducted by Samuel Adams, Hancock, Young, Molineux; and Warren.¹ An organization having been effected, Samuel Adams arose in the vast assemblage, and moved that —

"As the town have determined at a late meeting, legally assembled, that they will, to the utmost of their power, prevent the landing of the tea, the question be now put, — Whether this body are absolutely determined that the tea now arrived in Capt. Hall shall be returned to the place from whence it came at all events."

The motion was direct and to the point. It left nothing to be inferred, and committed the people of Boston and the surrounding towns distinctly to an issue with George the Third, who had determined "to try the question with America." There was not one dissenting voice. It now appeared, however, that Faneuil Hall could not contain the crowd, who numbered upwards of five thousand, and probably filled all the adjacent street. The meeting was therefore adjourned to the Old South, leave having been obtained for the purpose.² How must the Loyalists have looked, as they witnessed the great throng passing towards the church, pouring into its spacious portals, and packing the building to its utmost capacity. The scene illustrated the irresistible power of the Committee of Correspondence, by whose noiseless spells the multitude had been evoked. The church being filled, and silence restored, Samuel Adams's motion was again made with an addition, and the question put: —

"Is it the firm resolution of this body that the tea shall not only be sent back, but that no duty shall be paid thereon?"

¹ Bancroft, VI. 478.

² Boston Gazette, Dec. 6, 1773, which contains the fullest account of this meeting.

The question was answered unanimously in the affirmative, and Young held that "the only way to get rid of it was to throw it overboard."¹

It had been expected that the consignees of the tea would send in some proposals at the opening of the meeting, but, as none were made, the body adjourned to three o'clock, P. M., when, having come together again in the church, it was voted that the tea should go back in the same vessel in which it had arrived; upon which Mr. Rotch, the owner of the Dartmouth, being present, stated that he should enter his protest against the proceedings. He had the whole power of England to back him in his protest, and the royal will would carry into effect any necessary measures of coercion; but the meeting, without a dissenting voice, passed the significant vote, that Mr. Rotch be directed not to enter this tea, and that the doing of it would be at his peril; while Captain Hall, the master of the ship, was to be informed that "it was at his peril, if he suffered any of the tea brought by him to be landed." For the security of the ship, a watch of twenty-five persons was authorized for the approaching night, under Captain Edward Proctor, and the names of the townsmen who were volunteers on the occasion were handed in to the Moderator.

Some one here informed the meeting that the Governor had required the Justices of the Peace to meet and suppress any routs, riots, &c., of the people that might happen. The intimation was a repeated insult to the town, and a continuation of the policy which his Excellency had often recommended against the inestimable right of town meetings guaranteed by the charter. He had already nearly made up his mind to flee to the Castle, a favorite device of the Royalists on these occasions, to create the appearance of seeking refuge from violence; but he was dissuaded from the step by friends, who saw in it only an exhibition of his natural cowardice. This attempt to give an orderly, legal town meeting the char-

¹ Bancroft, VI. 478.

acter of a mob was received with a unanimous vote that his conduct carried a designed reflection upon the people there assembled, and was solely calculated to serve the views of Administration.¹

Hancock now stated that he had learned, through Mr. Copley, that the consignees had only last evening received their letters from London, and were desirous of having further time. Upon this, so read the records, the meeting "out of great tenderness to these persons, and from a strong desire to bring the matter to a conclusion, notwithstanding the time they had expended upon them to no purpose, were prevailed upon to adjourn to the next morning at nine o'clock."

The next morning, on the last day of the month, "the long expected proposals were at last brought into the meeting, not directed to the Moderator, but to John Scollay, Esq., one of the selectmen." It was, however, voted that they be read. The consignees declared it to be out of their power to send the tea back, but offered to store them until word could be obtained from their constituents. Before the meeting could take action on this reply, Greenleaf, the Sheriff of Suffolk, entered, and begged leave of the Moderator to read a proclamation from the Governor. The reading was at first opposed; but Samuel Adams having signified his acquiescence, the meeting unanimously consented, and the paper was read.² It was addressed to Jonathan Williams, the Moderator. After rehearsing pompously the carrying of unlawful measures into execution, openly violating and setting at naught the good and wholesome laws of the Province, his Excellency concludes by "warning, exhorting, and requiring" the assemblage to disperse, and "surcease all further unlawful proceedings at their utmost peril." No sooner was this uttered than "a loud and very

¹ Printed Circular of the Proceedings of the Several Meetings, sent out by the Boston Committee of Correspondence.

² Hutchinson's History, III. 432.

general hiss”¹ followed, “which continued during the stay of the Sheriff and accompanied him in his retreat.”²

Copley, the artist, son-in-law of Clarke, one of the consignees, seems to have acted the part of a mediator between the people and the Loyalists. He was a general favorite in Boston, and though, at the crisis, he sided with the government, his suggestions were often listened to, as proceeding from a kind and honest heart. After the storm of hisses had subsided, and the meeting had unanimously voted not to disperse, Copley desired to know whether, in case he could prevail upon the Clarkes to present themselves before the people, they would be treated with civility. The promise was given, and two hours were allowed him to produce his friends, during which time the meeting adjourned. He was obliged to go to the Castle by water, and failed in his mission, as the Clarkes refused to appear. Copley returned some time after the meeting had reorganized, apologized for his delay, and reported the answers of the consignees, which was voted to be “not in the least degree satisfactory.” It was doubtless Copley to whom Hutchinson alluded in his letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, referring to this meeting.

“It looks,” he says, “as if the principal actors in the late town meetings were afraid of being, one time or other, called to account by some other authority than any within the Province; for when anything very extravagant is to be done, a meeting of the people at large is called by printed notifications without signers, but selectmen, town clerk, &c., attend. In the last Assembly, in the largest meeting-house in town, a gentleman who spoke in behalf of the consignees called upon the selectmen. Mr. Adams the Representative corrected him, and remarked that they knew no selectmen at those meetings.”³

The owners and factors of such of the tea-ships as had not

¹ Account of the meeting in the Boston Gazette.

² Account by Lord North, in presenting American papers to the House of Commons, March 7, 1774.

³ Hutchinson to the Earl of Dartmouth, 1773.

yet arrived were summoned and notified of the resolutions of the meeting, and Captain Hall of the Dartmouth, being present, was forbidden, at his peril, to aid or assist in unloading the interdicted cargo, and was ordered to carry it back to London, to which he agreed. A watch of armed patrols was appointed for the ensuing night, who, in case they were molested, were to ring the bells, while six post riders were selected to alarm the neighboring towns, should occasion require. Resolutions were also passed against such merchants in the Province as had even "inadvertently" imported tea while subject to the duty under the former act. Warning was given to all persons not to import until the unrighteous act was repealed, and all masters of vessels were forbidden to take the obnoxious article on board their ships, under pain of being considered enemies of their country, of having the landing forcibly prevented, and the tea sent back to the place from whence it might come. And it was voted to carry the resolutions into effect "at the risk of their lives and property." A committee, consisting of Adams, Hancock, Phillips, Rowe, and Williams, was appointed to transmit these proceedings to New York and Philadelphia, and to England, and to every seaport in Massachusetts.¹ Volunteers for the night watches having been requested to leave their names at the printing-office of Edes and Gill, the meeting dissolved.

The account of this meeting and that of the previous day appeared in the Boston Gazette, occupying four columns. Adams had the proceedings struck off as supplements or extras, and scattered abroad far and near. Hutchinson enclosed copies to his correspondents in England. One of his letters, without address, takes an extended view of the meeting.

"I must refer you," says the writer, "to the newspapers for the history of the resolves of the town and other proceedings, but will

¹ Hutchinson, III. 433.

enclose the printed account of the doings of this week, which exceeds everything which has yet been done. Hancock, who had been moderator of the first meeting, took care to keep clear of this, and they drew in a nephew of Dr. Franklin, whom I greatly pity. Hancock, notwithstanding, has exposed himself, by his unguarded speeches, more than ever before. You see they print their acts without any attestation; but though it is called a meeting of the people, yet it is all under the selectmen of this town, who attended the whole meeting, as I am informed, together with Adams and Phillips, Representatives. Surely this act will not pass without something effectual.

"It may be said by some, that there will not be sufficient evidence to subject particular persons to answer. There are the printed votes of the town, who are the selectmen who call the meetings, who the moderator, who the committees, &c.; and though the paper I enclose has not the name of the printer, yet the facts that are in it are notorious. It is part of a newspaper which all the printers were enjoined to publish, as you will see by the enclosed letter from the Secretary. There are great numbers of the people who can testify to every part, but dare not do it voluntarily, and cannot be compelled. It is in everybody's mouth, that Hancock said at the close of the meeting he would be willing to spend his fortune and life itself in so good a cause. But the Secretary says he cannot find anybody who will make oath to it. In such a case, are not public printed papers presumptive evidence sufficient to proceed upon? This I submit."¹

At the same time the Governor recommended, as a means of stopping the progress of the opposition, to separate Boston from the rest of the Province, and advised Bernard, in London, of the "invincible difficulties" in which the tea-ships would soon be involved. His letters, too, illustrate the perfect unity of purpose existing among the people. Such a thing as a traitor was not thought of. It would have been an absolute impossibility to obtain the slightest testimony from any who were in the confidence of the leaders, though Hutchinson was always casting about him for the means of commencing criminal proceedings against them.

¹ Hutchinson to —, Dec. 3, 1773.

During the first week in December the other tea-ships arrived, and, under the directions of the Committees of Correspondence, were anchored near the Dartmouth, so that the guard established over her might answer for all. It was the immovable determination of Boston that the teas should not be landed; and by the revenue laws the ships, without entering the tea, could not be cleared from the port, and would be liable to seizure. Forcible interference with these proceedings would certainly have brought on a bloody conflict. The spirit of the people was up, and action instead of words was henceforth to be the rule. The guard, armed with muskets and bayonets, some of them perhaps the same that had been used in the conquest of Canada, patrolled the streets as in time of war, and every half-hour in the frosty night word passed "All is well."¹ Placards had been posted by the "True Sons of Liberty," announcing their determination to "resent any or the least insult or menace offered to any one or more of the several Committees appointed by the body at Faneuil Hall." They also pledged themselves to support the printers in anything the Committee of Correspondence should desire them to print; while, as a warning, one of these handbills was to be posted at the door of the dwelling-house of any offender against the proceedings of the town.² It is evident, from these notices, that force had been thought of at some consultations between the military and civil authorities. Indeed, the Cadets, under command of John Hancock, had already been ordered to prepare for service; but it is not possible that their aid could have been obtained for any emergency, and Hancock, personally, declined to act.³ At the same time the Committee of Correspondence, the virtual government of the Province, took care to cultivate the spirit of resistance, by inspiring the public with confidence. This was done by Samuel Adams,

¹ Bancroft, VII. 480.

² Placard, quoted in Lossing's *Field-Book of the Revolution*, 1855, I. 496.

³ Hutchinson, III. 438.

who regularly sent to the Boston Gazette the correspondence from the other towns in answer to his Circulars. The numbers published in December teem with these patriotic responses, which came in by post riders from all parts of Massachusetts; and to make the union more general in character, the proceedings in relation to the expected tea shipments arriving in other Colonies were also published.

The Committee continued to send its appeals abroad to New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, and Pennsylvania, urging union in action and sentiment, while at home, as the customary twenty days' probation of the three tea-ships drew to a close, the preparations were made to put the long-concerted plan into execution. Yet the Loyalists, as their letters show, underrated the intensity of the public feeling, and few believed that anything would be done beyond mere resolutions and debates. But the Committee sought their object not by passionate proceedings, but through legal approaches. Nothing was done without being first submitted to the test of reason and candid deliberation. Every member of that body was sincerely desirous to have the tea returned to London peaceably, and thus avoid the painful alternative which the case presented. Thus, as long as a reasonable hope remained, they continued their urgent efforts for the accomplishment of that object. They held a meeting on the 11th of December, with Samuel Adams in the chair, when Rotch, the owner of the Dartmouth, having been summoned before them, was asked why he had not kept his engagement to send the vessel and tea back to England. He replied that it was out of his power to do so. He was then told that the ship must go, and that the people of Boston and the neighboring towns expected and required it.¹ While this was going on, two war ships were ordered to guard the passages leading out of the harbor, and the guns of Castle William were loaded; and by Hutchinson's orders no vessels were to be allowed to go to sea without a permit.

¹ Bancroft, VI. 482.

It was apparently expected that some attempt would be made to put to sea with the ships; but so secretly had everything been conducted, that not one out of "the circle" imagined what was about to happen.

On the 13th, there was a meeting of the Committees of the five towns. It was only three days before the time when the ships, to avoid confiscation, must land their cargoes. The next day, Tuesday, a meeting was called at the Old South, which people from a "distance of twenty miles" attended.¹ Rotch was again summoned, and enjoined at his peril to demand of the Collector of the Customs a clearance for his ship; and Benjamin Kent, Samuel Adams, and eight others were appointed a committee to see this done. The meeting then adjourned to Thursday, the 16th, the last of the twenty days. The town's committee accompanied Rotch to the lodgings of the Collector, who refused to give an answer until the next morning. The Boston Committee of Correspondence had the last of their preparatory meetings on Tuesday evening. Since the assembling of the Committees of the five towns on Monday, they had held anxious consultations on subjects involving the fate of America, and perhaps, eventually, the liberties of mankind. Long and important were the discussions, and the plans decided upon were fraught with peril. That little body of stout-hearted men were making history that should endure for ages. Their secret deliberations, could they be exhumed from the dust of time, would present a curious page in the annals of Boston; but the seal of silence was upon the pen of the secretary, as well as upon the lips of the members. Morning and evening, for two days, they had been in close communion, yet the journal for that time contains only the brief and prudent entry: "No business transacted, matter of record."²

Wednesday came, and one more attempt was made to obtain a clearance for the Dartmouth. The world should not

¹ Boston Gazette, Dec. 20, 1773.

² Bancroft, VI. 484.

say in future times that efforts were wanting for obtaining justice up to the last moment. Adams, Kent, and the others of the town's committee again accompanied Rotch to the Collector. This time he was with the Comptroller at the Custom-House, and both "unequivocally and finally" refused to allow the ships to depart. This was conclusive, as far as the power of the revenue officers was concerned. But there yet remained one more chance.

The meeting of Tuesday had been adjourned to Thursday, the 16th, at ten o'clock. At that hour the people of Boston, with at least two thousand from the country, met at the Old South. The eventful day had arrived, and the issue was to be decided. Rotch came into the meeting, and reported that the Collector had refused him a clearance for the Dartmouth. He was then directed instantly to protest against the decision of the Custom-House, and apply to the Governor for his passport by the Castle. As Hutchinson, anticipating something of the kind, had left town for his country-seat at Milton, it would take time for an answer; and the meeting adjourned until afternoon, bidding Rotch make all haste. At three o'clock the town again assembled, numbering, in and around the church, seven thousand men, — the largest meeting ever held in Boston. The agent did not appear, and the assembly waited "till near sunset."

During this interval speeches were made by several. The momentous question arose whether the meeting would abide by their former resolutions "with respect to the not suffering the tea to be landed." Samuel Adams, Young, and others made addresses on this subject, and the first two advised to stand by the resolutions. "Who knows," said Rowe, "how tea will mingle with salt water"? and the suggestion was received with great applause.¹ Quincy, always eloquent and forcible, but lately returned from his Southern tour, was present, and arose to restrain the meeting from any intended decisive measures.

¹ H. Niles's *Principles and Acts of the Revolution*, pp. 485, 486.

"It is not, Mr. Moderator, the spirit that vapors within these walls that must stand us in stead. The exertions of this day will call forth events which will make a very different spirit necessary for our salvation. Whoever supposes that shouts and hosannas will terminate the trials of the day entertains a childish fancy. We must be grossly ignorant of the importance and value of the prize for which we contend; we must be equally ignorant of the power of those combined against us; we must be blind to that malice, inveteracy, and insatiable revenge which actuates our enemies, public and private, abroad and in our bosom, to hope that we shall end this controversy without the sharpest conflict, to flatter ourselves that popular resolves, popular harangues, popular acclamations, and popular vapor will vanquish our foes. Let us consider the issue. Let us look to the end. Let us weigh and consider before we advance to those measures which must bring on the most trying and terrible struggle this country ever saw."

These counsels of moderation came from a brave and generous heart. Quincy was among those who saw the approaching contest, and he warned his townsmen against precipitancy, though none more ardently desired the happiness and freedom of America. He was even now fast sinking in a decline, and, six months later, sailed for England, whence he returned no more to aid in the great cause of liberty. Others said, in reply to him, "Now the hand is to the plough, there must be no looking back."¹

The remarks of Adams must be inferred from his writings. He seldom made long speeches; but what he urged was to the point, and advanced with no flowers of rhetoric or studied imagery. His calm and well-considered advice was always supported by solid reasoning, and had all the more weight for its unpretending directness and never-failing wisdom and good sense.

When the question was finally put to the seven thousand assembled, it was unanimously resolved that the tea should not be landed.² By this time it had been dark an hour.

¹ Bancroft, VI. 486.

² Boston Post Boy, Dec. 20, 1773.

Still the great meeting remained, and awaited the coming of Rotch with the Governor's final decision. The dim light of the church added to the impressive solemnity of the occasion. All were convinced, as the cold night darkened without, that the last scene was about to be enacted. Everything was arranged and in readiness, yet only a few could have known what was intended. Should the Governor give the clearance, the ships would be at once sent to sea, and stout arms from among a nautical people were willing to assist in working them down the harbor. In case of refusal, it would be impossible to pass the guns of the Castle and Admiral Montagu's ships at the Narrows, and there remained but one alternative to prevent the landing of the accursed freight. At a quarter past six o'clock Rotch appeared, and reported that he had entered his protest in accordance with the directions of the meeting of Tuesday, and that he had waited on the Governor for a pass, but "his Excellency told him he could not, consistently with his duty, grant it until his vessel was qualified."¹ The proceedings which followed showed how perfectly systematic were the plans of the Committee of Correspondence. As soon as Rotch had made his report, Samuel Adams stood up and gave the word: "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!"²

Instantly a shout was heard at a door of the church from those who had been intently listening for the voice of Adams. The war-whoop resounded. Forty or fifty men disguised as Indians, who must have been concealed near by, appeared and passed by the church entrance, and, encouraged by Adams, Hancock, and others, hurried along to Griffin's, now Liverpool Wharf, near the foot of Pearl Street. The accounts of this event are such as were guardedly given at the time of its occurrence; and posterity can only imagine the scene

¹ Boston Gazette, Dec. 20, 1773.

² Bancroft, VI. 486, quoted from Francis Rotch's Information before the Privy Council.

of the thousands pouring out of the church portals into the wintry night, and making their way towards the harbor. In accordance with the arrangements, guards were posted to prevent the intrusion of spies, when the "Mohawks" and some others, not so disguised, sprang aboard the ships, and three hundred and forty-two chests of tea were emptied into the Bay "without the least injury to the vessels or any other property."¹ "Nothing was destroyed but the tea, and this was not done with noise and tumult, little or nothing being said either by the agents or the multitude who looked on. The impression was that of solemnity, rather than of riot and confusion";² and a looker-on, from a small eminence about fifty yards from the nearest ship, observed that the people on board were disguised. He could hear them cut open the tea chests, when they had brought them upon the deck, so noiselessly were the proceedings conducted.³ Three hours were occupied in the destruction, and by the end of that time it was estimated that at least one hundred and forty persons were engaged, accessions having been constantly made to the original number. The moon shone from a clear sky during the evening, and the British squadron lay but a short distance off, yet no interruption was experienced either from fleet or troops. When the last chest had been emptied,

¹ S. Adams to A. Lee, Dec. 31, 1773.

² Niles's Principles and Acts, p. 486. The Governor forwarded a detailed narrative of the event to the East India Company, dated December 19, 1773. "It appears," said he, "to have been a concerted plan; for a sufficient number of men to do the work were prepared and disguised before the people came down from the meeting, and guards were placed to prevent any spies, and the whole conducted with very little tumult, nor was there any suspicion of an intention, in the conductors of the affair, that the teas should be destroyed."

³ Examination of Dr. Hugh Williamson before the King's Council in London (Mass. Hist. Society's Collections). Dr. Williamson, who seems to have taken particular pains to inform himself of the acts of the "rioters," was evidently regarded in Boston as friendly to the cause. He was the bearer of Adams's letter to A. Lee of Dec. 31. Adams, in that letter, says of him:—"We have had great pleasure in his company for a few weeks past, and he favored the meeting with his presence."

and the Mohawks and their assistants had gained the wharf, they marched homewards through the town with fife and drum, passing the house of a Loyalist, where Admiral Montagu was visiting, and the Admiral bandied some words with them as they went by.¹ The work had not been accomplished an hour too soon; for the next morning the tea would have been placed under the protection of the Castle. People from towns twenty miles from Boston had attended the meeting that day at the Old South,² and some of them the same night carried the news back to their villages.³ Boston subsided at once into its usual quiet. The next day the tea was found heaped up in windrows upon the Dorchester beach,⁴ where the wind and tide had carried it. The vessels from which the tea was thrown were the Dartmouth, the Eleanor, and the Beaver. A fourth, a brig from London, having fifty-eight chests on board, had already been cast away "on the back of Cape Cod,"⁵ where the "Cape Indians" probably gave a good account of "the detested tea."⁶

The closest secrecy was preserved as to the authors of this scheme and the actors in its accomplishment, until after the War of Independence, when the names of a number were obtained. In 1836, eleven survived who had been mere lads at the time. Lendall, Pitts, and Adam Colson were probably the leading actors. Early in the present century, a resident of Boston who had conversed with the men of the Revolution on this subject, wrote: "Mr. Samuel Adams is thought to have been in the counselling of this exploit, and many other men who were leaders in the political affairs of the times; and the hall of council is said to have been in the back room of Edes and Gill's printing-office, at the corner of the alley leading to Brattle Street Church from Court

¹ Traits of the Tea Party, and Lossing's Field Book, I. 499.

² S. Adams to A. Lee, Dec. 31, 1773.

³ Bancroft, VI. 487.

⁴ Barry's Massachusetts, II. 473.

⁵ Adams to Lee, Dec. 31, 1773.

⁶ Boston Gazette, Dec. 20, 1773.

Street.”¹ Others of the survivors of that intrepid band, as well as eminent men of the last century, have repeatedly mentioned Adams as one of the prime movers in the Tea-Party.² That he was the guiding spirit in the public transactions between the arrival of the news that the tea had been shipped and its destruction, we have already seen. Only three days before the first public measures against the landing of the tea, Hutchinson had written to the Ministry describing Samuel Adams as the “chief manager on this side the water”;³ and his letter to Lord Dartmouth, pointing out Adams as the leader and “director of the town of Boston and the Assembly,” had been sent less than three weeks before. Adams had hinted to Arthur Lee, in November, that his next letter would probably be upon no trifling matter. By the next vessel he sent his friend a full account of the great event.

“You cannot imagine,” he writes, “the height of joy that sparkles in the eyes and animates the countenances as well as the hearts of all we meet on this occasion, excepting the disappointed, disconcerted Hutchinson and his tools. I repeat what I wrote you in my last,—if Lord Dartmouth has prepared his plan, let him produce it speedily; but his Lordship must know that it must be such a plan as will not barely amuse, much less further irritate, but conciliate the affection of the inhabitants.”⁴

The Committee of Correspondence held a meeting the next day, and appointed Samuel Adams and four others to prepare an account of the last night’s proceedings; and Paul Revere rode express to Philadelphia with the news, which was received there on the 26th with the ringing of bells and every sign of joy and universal approbation; and the next day, at a public meeting, it was indorsed “with universal

¹ Niles’s Principles and Acts, p. 486.

² Verbal statements of Hon. Perez Morton, Ex-Gov. Strong, Samuel Shed, and others.

³ Hutchinson to —, Oct. 27, 1773.

⁴ S. Adams to A. Lee, Dec. 31, 1773.

claps and huzzas." "We all allow," says a letter thence, "you have had greater trials than any of the Colonies, and we wonder much of your great patience."¹

When the Governor and Loyalists generally had recovered from their astonishment at the boldness of the act, its great importance, and probable consequences, and the power of the secret organization as displayed by the order and system with which everything had been conducted, their first thought was of arrests, transportation to England for trial, and examples at Execution Dock. Hutchinson busily consulted his law books,² and wrote home full accounts of the event. The members of the Committee were watched with jealous care by the Governor's spies, to obtain information for use at the trials. They were liable to be seized at any moment by the military, and shipped secretly to England; and plans to that effect actually existed. "Detector," a writer in the Gazette, warns "those dark and villanous *assassins* that their *conspiracies* against the lives and liberties of a number of the most worthy patriots in the metropolis and vicinity are well known. Their execrable measures to secure and transport them abroad are seasonably discovered. Their persons are marked, and if they are disposed for a concealed plot, they may probably fall into the pit they are digging for others."³ It was about a week after the Tea-Party that these secret plans became known to the Committee; and that there was good reason to guard against them is evident from a pledge signed by the members four days after the appearance of "Detector's" card.

"Voted, That the subscribers do engage to exert our utmost influence to support and vindicate each other, and any person or persons who may be likely to suffer for any noble efforts they may have made to save their country, by defeating the operations of the Brit-

¹ Letter from Philadelphia, dated Dec. 28, 1773, published in Boston Gazette, Jan. 24, 1774.

² S. Adams to A. Lee, Dec. 31, 1773.

³ Boston Gazette, Dec. 20, 1773.

ish Parliament, expressly designed to extort a revenue from the Colonies against their consent.

MR. SAMUEL ADAMS,	MR. JOHN PITTS,
MR. ROBERT PIERPONT,	MR. OLIVER WENDELL,
DR. THOMAS YOUNG,	MR. WILLIAM COOPER,
MR. WILLIAM POWELL,	MR. WILLIAM MOLINEUX,
DR. BENJAMIN CHURCH,	JOSEPH GREENLEAF,
CAPT. JOHN BRADFORD,	MR. NATHAN APPLETON,
MR. JOHN SWEETZER,	MR. WILLIAM GREENLEAF."
DEACON BOYNTON,	

"BOSTON, Dec. 24, 1773." ¹

Here was a pledge made among a plain democratic committee of the people, for mutual protection at this perilous crisis against the most powerful nation in the world, whose King and Parliament they had defied in the cause of justice and humanity. Little show as it makes on paper, it takes us back to dangers incurred by the Revolutionary patriots, and is affecting from its very simplicity and the circumstances under which it was signed. On the margin is a note that it is not to be recorded in the journal as part of the Committee's proceedings. It is in the handwriting of Church, who so soon afterwards proved unworthy the trust reposed in him. The first signer was Robert Pierpont, but it would seem that the members present desired their master spirit to appear at the head of the list, for Pierpont's name is erased, and Samuel Adams's signature takes precedence. This is an apparently trifling, but at the same time eloquent, testimonial of the all-powerful leadership which Adams exercised in Boston. This position was recognized alike by friends and foes. It resulted from no effort on his part to reach political ascendancy, but his resolute energy of purpose and undaunted courage, and, above all, his sound judgment, which pointed him out naturally as the chief manager in important measures,—these were the ever active agencies which made communi-

¹ Journal of the Committee of Correspondence.

ties look to him for direction. Edward Everett, who was intimate, early in the present century, with persons who had witnessed the career of Samuel Adams, thus refers in his Lexington oration to this remarkable guiding and directing power : —

“More than most of his associates, he understood the efficacy of personal intercourse with the people. It was Samuel Adams, more than any other individual, who brought the question home to their bosoms and firesides, not by profound disquisitions and elaborate reports, — though these in their place were not spared, — but in the caucus, the club-room, the Green Dragon, in the ship-yards, in actual conference, man to man and heart to heart. He was forty-three years of age when he came to the House of Representatives. There he was of course a leader ; a member of every important committee ; the author of many of the ablest and boldest state papers of the time. But the throne of his ascendancy was in Faneuil Hall. As each new measure of arbitrary power was announced from across the Atlantic, or each new act of menace and violence on the part of the officers of the government or of the army occurred in Boston, — its citizens, oftentimes in astonishment and perplexity, rallied to the sound of his voice in Faneuil Hall ; and there as from the crowded gallery or the moderator’s chair he animated, enlightened, fortified, and roused the admiring throng, he seemed to gather them together beneath the ægis of his indomitable spirit, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.”

The destruction of the tea was the great crowning act of the Revolution prior to the commencement of hostilities. It marks an epoch in the progress of events. There was no receding from the position now assumed in the system of opposition, which must henceforth move onward or cease entirely. The least intimation of a desire to go back, any faltering or hesitancy, would have been ruin to the cause. “Samuel Adams,” says Hutchinson, “is in his glory,” and, with his resolute friends, prepared to make the most advantageous use of the event. A writer who lived in the last century, and was personally cognizant of the spirit of the

Revolution, says of this great landmark in American History: —

“It was the general opinion among reflecting politicians after this event, and of all who had been careful to watch the temper of the British Ministry, that an open rupture must speedily follow,—that measures of vengeance would be adopted by the advisers of the King, which would either lead to unconditional subjection or to *independence*. Mr. Samuel Adams was among the small number of those who looked forward with confidence to the latter. His influence among his countrymen was deservedly great, and his exertions to inspire his own confidence in others were still greater. Many of those who had been the foremost and most zealous in espousing the cause of the people against the usurpations of the Court and Parliament of Great Britain were now gloomy and despondent at the prospect before them. They had neither a wish for independence in its sense of *separation*, nor the smallest hope of success in the struggle which they knew was preparing for them. They desired no more than the peaceful enjoyment of the liberties allowed to them by the British Constitution, and secured to them by the Colonial charters. For this they had been ready at all times to speak, to write, and to act.”¹

In South Carolina, the tea, which arrived on the 2d of December, was forbidden to be sold, and was left to rot in the cellars where it was stored, the consignees having been persuaded by the people to resign. In Philadelphia, on the 27th, as George Clymer and Thomas Mifflin wrote to Samuel Adams, the consignee who arrived with the detested cargo resigned at the instance of a meeting of five thousand people, and the captain agreed to sail the next day for England. The Boston Committee kept up its correspondence with the other New England Colonies, and with New York and Pennsylvania, and a general feeling of harmony existed.² The desire for a Congress of the several American States had grown into a recognized sentiment, which was

¹ Paul Allen's *American Revolution*, I. 170, 171.

² Bancroft, VI. 489.

shortly to knit the Colonies more firmly together. The news was meantime on the wing to England, where it excited no less astonishment than among the Loyalists in America, and was made the groundwork for retaliatory measures, at the meeting of Parliament in March following.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Meeting of the General Court. — Adams holds the Public Good to be above all other Considerations. — He directs the Proceedings of the Assembly. — Impeachment of the Chief Justice. — The Fifth of March. — Hancock's Oration. — News of the Tea-Party reaches England. — Proceedings of Parliament. — Eloquence of Edmund Burke. — Passage of the Boston Port Act. — Franklin advises Massachusetts to pay for the Tea. — Adams to be arrested as "the Chief of the Revolution." — Massachusetts, by the Pen of Adams, sends her Last Instructions to Franklin. — Adams predicts a Mighty American Empire, and the eventual Decline of England. — Some of the Leading Characters of Boston. — News of the late Acts of Parliament received in Boston. — Convention of Committees of Correspondence. — They scorn to pay for the Tea. — Adams prepares a Circular Letter to the Committees of other Colonies, asking for a Concert of Action. — Magical Effect of this Appeal throughout America.

THE Massachusetts Assembly stood prorogued to the 20th of January, — "to about five weeks after this riot," as Hutchinson states. He found it prudent, however, to further prorogue them to the 26th. To avoid an undesirable answer,¹ he took no notice in his opening speech of the late transactions, and to the general business of the session added only his instructions to signify the King's disapprobation of the Committees of Correspondence sitting and acting during the recess of the Court.² The House, by the pen of Samuel Adams, replied in defence of the Committees and their measures.

"We cannot," he says, "omit saying, upon this occasion, that while the common rights of the American subjects continue to be attacked in various instances, and at times when the several Assemblies are not sitting, it is highly necessary that they should correspond with each other, in order to unite in the most effectual means for the obtaining a redress of their grievances. And, as the sitting

¹ Hutchinson's History, III. 441.

² Bradford's State Papers, p. 410.

of the General Assemblies in this and most of the Colonies depends upon the pleasure of the Governors, who hold themselves under the direction of administration, it is to be expected that the meeting of the Assemblies will be so ordered as that the intention proposed by correspondence between them will be impracticable, but by committees to sit and act in the recess. We would moreover observe that, as it has been the practice for years past for the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of this Province, and other officers of the Crown, at all times to correspond with ministers of state and persons of influence and distinction in the nation, in order to concert and carry on such measures of the British Administration as have been deemed by the Colonists to be grievous to them, it cannot be thought unreasonable or improper for the Colonists to correspond with their agents, as well as with each other, to the end that their grievances may be so explained to his Majesty as that, in his justice, he may afford them necessary relief.

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In the mean time this House will employ the powers with which they are intrusted, in supporting his Majesty's just authority in the Province, according to the royal charter, and in despatching such public business as now properly lies before us. And while we pursue such measures as tend, by God's blessing, to the redress of grievances and to the restoration and establishment of the public liberty, we persuade ourselves that we shall at the same time, as far as in us lies, most effectually secure the tranquillity and good order of the government and the great end for which it was instituted, — the safety and welfare of the people.”¹

The general principle, founded upon the natural rights of man, that “the welfare and safety of the people” were paramount to all other considerations, was a democratic theory often advanced by Samuel Adams during the pre-Revolutionary controversies. “The good of the people” was of the first consideration. The doctrines of Locke, Montesquieu, and other great political writers, were his guides. Governments were founded in equal rights; and laws were only to be regarded as such, when constituted by public ap-

¹ Bradford's State Papers, pp. 411, 412.

probation as a foundation of government. He never ceased to enunciate this as the basis of all freedom, and through the press and by legislative documents pointed out the blindness and ignominy of submitting to the tyranny of Parliament, because its advocates could produce specious reasons, supported by precedent and law. It could doubtless have been argued by the crown lawyers, that casting the tea overboard was "against law" as laid down in the books; but had the patriots applied to those authorities before acting, when only energy and determination could save the country, the advance of the Revolution would have been slow indeed. A month before the first steps were taken towards preventing the landing of the tea, Hutchinson had written: —

"The leaders here have reason to acknowledge that their cause is not to be defended on constitutional principles, and Adams now gives out that there is no need of it; they are upon better ground; all men have a natural right to change a bad constitution for a better whenever they have it in their power."¹

In the message of the House, sent August 1, 1770, Samuel Adams says: "Whenever a dispute has arisen within the realm between the Crown and the two Houses of Parliament, or either of them, was it ever imagined that the King in his Privy Council had authority to decide it? However, there is a test, a standard, common to all; we mean the public good."² And the Governor, in a private letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, informs him that a principle had been avowed by Samuel Adams and those attached to him, that "the public good was above all other considerations."³ This opinion was not, however, by any means to be construed into a defiance of all law. No act of tyranny but can be plausibly defended by an array of law quotations, which, if strictly regarded, would effectually bar any at-

¹ Hutchinson to Col. Williams, Oct. 7, 1773.

² Bradford's State Papers, p. 241. See, *ante*, I. 349.

³ Hutchinson to Dartmouth, Oct. 9, 1773. This sentiment is also expressed in the Report to the Town, March 23, 1773. See, *ante*, II. 53.

tempts at redress. Adams saw plainly through these legal subterfuges, and brushed them contemptuously aside, whenever the law was distorted to defend a wicked system for the destruction of his country. To be binding and effective, the law, in his estimation, should strictly conform to the requirements of the Constitution and the rights sacredly guaranteed by the Colonial charters. Upon that platform, no man more carefully studied the measures for the preservation of the popular liberties; none advanced with more deliberate caution and readiness to uphold these acts, by pointing to the law and charter in support of them. Thus law was his guide as long as it did not violate the Constitution. When that instrument was trodden under foot, he fell back upon the original rights of the people, as superior to all other considerations.

One of the first questions in the present session related to the settlement of salaries by the King upon the judges. Three or four of these officers, having been publicly called upon, refused to accept the royal salaries; but Oliver, the Chief Justice, held out, and the House commenced proceedings against him. A vote was taken on the 11th of February for his removal, and the "Committee to consider the State of the Province" recommended the passage of an order for the adjournment of the Superior Court (which was to meet on the following day) to a further time. On the 24th, the House voted to impeach the Chief Justice before the Council; and the Governor was waited upon by a committee with Samuel Adams at its head,¹ desiring him to be in the chair on that occasion. His Excellency replied that he "knew of no crimes or misdemeanors, nor any offences whatever, which were not cognizable before some judicatory or other in the Province"; and refused to assume authority to proceed with the impeachment. The House, on receiving this answer, decided to make no immediate reply, but pushed

¹ Journal of the House for February, 1774. This measure was advised by John Adams, and the articles of impeachment exist in his handwriting.

forward the impeachment, which Hutchinson thus describes : —

“ Without taking any notice of this message, they resolved to proceed. Mr. Adams, chairman of the committee, addressed the Council in this form : ‘ May it please your Excellency and the Honorable Council,’ — Mr. Bowdoin, one of the Council, no doubt by concert, observed to him that the Governor was not in Council. This gave opportunity for an answer. The Governor is ‘ presumed ’ to be present. This was certainly a very idle presumption. It gave pretence, however, for Mr. Adams to report to the House, and being Clerk of the House, afterwards to enter upon the journals that the committee had impeached the Chief Justice before the Governor and Council, and prayed that they would assign a time for hearing and determining thereon.”¹

Samuel Adams appears, by the journals, to have been the leader in this bold proceeding. His name heads every committee in connection with it. The draft of the message on the Governor’s reply, and the resolutions explaining why the House would not now make a grant to the Chief Justice, were all reported by him,² and he was the mouth-piece of nearly every important committee to the end of the Legislature. Several of the state papers of the session, embodying leading principles, are extant in his autograph. One of these was in answer to the Governor’s reply to the House, requesting him to be present at Oliver’s impeachment. It is noticed by Hutchinson, in his History, as “ framed principally for introducing several fleers, marked by inverted commas, at parts of the Governor’s speeches at former sessions ” ; and, he adds, “ It would be difficult to meet with stronger marks of envy, malignity, and a revengeful spirit, than appear in this composition.”³

Unfolding the time-stained document, which had thus excited the Governor’s ire, and which, with its corrections and erasures, remains just as it came from the pen of Adams,

¹ Hutchinson’s History, III. 446.

² Journal of the House for 1774.

³ Hutchinson’s History, III. 449, 450.

we are able to compare its spirit with the historian's description. The Governor had denied that any high crime or misdemeanor could be committed that was not recognizable by some court, and declared that neither he nor the Council had the right to try offenders against the law without authority granted by the charter, thus annulling the whole proceeding. The Council had requested the Governor to have the subject considered by the Board, but he had taken no notice of the application, and that body could not proceed without him. The answer holds that the charter places with the Governor the sole power of appointing judges and other civil officers; and though no power of removal was expressed in the instrument, yet such power was necessarily therein implied, and the greatest evils and inconsistencies would arise from the want of it.

"From the very nature of our Constitution," so the paper reads, "there must be somewhere a supreme court who have cognizance of the crimes and misdemeanors of high officers, — so far, at least, as is necessary for their removal. This supreme court we take to be the Governor and Council, and to this court are to be presented all complaints touching the misdemeanors of judges.

"And as it never was supposed in England that the dignity of the King was affected by any charges against his officers, we cannot conceive why it should be here; for though it is a maxim that the King can do no wrong, yet, by the misrepresentations of his officers, much wrong hath been, and may again be, brought to pass. If any person may by his conduct break through the Constitution of the Province, grounded on the charter and confirmed by constant usage, and promote and establish a different Constitution and practice, contrary to the charter in any one instance, without being liable to be called to account by any judicatory here, merely because the royal assent to such construction hath been procured, we do not know where such practices will stop; and we fear that by degrees, without our ever having an opportunity of being heard, one innovation after another will be forced upon us, until there will be not only 'an abridgment of what are called English liberties,' but a total sub-

version of the Constitution. We assure ourselves that were the nature of our grievances fully understood by our Sovereign, we should soon have reason to rejoice in the redress of them. But, if we must still be exposed to the continual false representations of persons who get themselves advanced to places of honor and profit by means of such false representations, and, when we complain, we cannot even be heard, we have yet the pleasure of contemplating that posterity, for whom we are now struggling, will do us justice by abhorring the memory of those men 'who owe their greatness to their country's ruin.'"¹

Though no action was had upon the articles of impeachment, they were printed, and had their effect upon the people. The Governor saw that the danger of "revolt" was daily increasing, and he resolved to put an end to the session. He therefore sent his Secretary with a message to both Houses for that purpose. While it was read in Council the House heard of the approaching document, and, seeing that no time was to be lost, closed the doors, refused the Secretary admission, and then proceeded with the requisite business. An effort had been already made to obtain the Governor's consent to a bill for the payment of Franklin and Lee, the agents in London; and Samuel Adams, chairman of a committee for that purpose, had reported to the House a remonstrance against Hutchinson's action. The last act of the session, while the door was still kept fast, was to direct the Committee of Correspondence to write to Franklin on the public grievances, — the last appeal of Massachusetts directly or indirectly for redress. This accomplished, the doors were thrown open, the Secretary admitted, and the Assembly prorogued on the 8th of March.

The Committee had as usual arranged for the anniversary of the Massacre, and John Hancock was this year the orator, Samuel Adams having been one of the committee appointed on the last occasion to select a suitable person. The town assembled at Faneuil Hall at ten o'clock in the forenoon, on

¹ From the original draft by S. Adams.

the 5th, where Samuel Adams was chosen Moderator "by a written vote," whence they adjourned to the Old South Meeting-house, probably owing to "the prodigious crowd,"¹ which the "Cradle of Liberty" could not contain. The meeting opened at the church with some introductory remarks from Adams, when the oration, which was received "with universal applause," was delivered, this being Hancock's first public address. That it was pronounced effectively and with oratorical skill, is evident from the effect upon the audience, which John Adams records on the same day. Hancock was a graceful, easy speaker, self-possessed and dignified in action, and thoroughly understood an audience of his native townsmen. It was known among a few that Samuel Adams composed nearly the whole of this oration for his friend. A letter asserting this as a fact, written in 1787, by one who personally knew both Adams and Hancock, was in existence a few years since, but has been lost. Mrs. Hannah Wells has repeatedly stated that she knew the time and place where her father used to meet Hancock while preparing the speech, but, as a girl, she had been cautioned not to mention it. Mr. Joseph Allen, a nephew and special favorite of Adams and a frequent visitor at his house, used to say that Hancock was long closeted with Adams on several occasions, a week or two before the delivering of the oration. The secret, however, seems to have leaked out among loyalists as well as patriots. After Dr. Warren's oration on the same subject, in the following year, a number of British officers and Tories assembled for the purpose of ridiculing his performance, and shortly afterwards a lampooning oration delivered by Dr. Bolton, on this occasion, appeared in pamphlet form. In this occurs the following delectable passage : —

"I cannot boast the ignorance of Hancock, the insolence of Adams, the absurdity of Rowe, the arrogance of Lee, the vicious life and untimely death of Molineux, the turgid bombast of Warren, the trea-

¹ Boston Gazette, March 7, 1774.

sons of Quincy, the hypocrisy of Cooper, nor the principles of Young. Nor can I with propriety pass over the character of these modern heroes (or to use their own phrase, Indians), without a few observations on their late conduct. . . . The first of these chiefs is Adams, a Sachem of vast elocution; but, being extremely poor, retails out syllables, sentences, and eulogiums to draw in the multitude; and it can be attested that what proceeds from the mouth of Adams is sufficient to fill the mouths of millions in America. But it is prophesied that the time is near at hand when their frothy food will fail them.¹

"But generous John scorns to let him starve;—far from it;—'t is well known his purse strings have been at Sam's disposal ever since he assisted in making the oration delivered by John, on the 5th of March, 1774, to a crowded audience of Narragansett Indians."²

Another of these pamphlet publications of a series of letters, printed in 1774, is filled with the most scurrilous allusions to the principal leaders, who are termed the "rebellious herd of calves, asses, knaves, and fools which compose the faction."

"The saints," it says, "professing loyalty and godliness at Boston, send us, by every vessel from their port, accumulated proofs of their treasons and rebellions. That mighty wise patriot, Mr. John Hancock, from the Old South Meeting-house has lately repeated a hash of abusive treasonable stuff, composed for him by the joint efforts of the Rev. Divine Samuel Cooper, that Rose of Sharon, and the very honest Samuel Adams, Clerk," etc.³

Adams or Cooper, or both, may have composed the oration, but that the performance was not the work of Hancock cannot be doubted after a perusal of any of his letters of this date. No state paper or public document is known to have

¹ This hint alludes to the special order, which had then been issued by the Ministry for the seizure of Samuel Adams, who was specially designated as an object of vengeance.

² An Oration delivered March 15, 1775, at the Request of a Number of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, by Dr. Bolton.

³ Extract printed in Drake's History of Boston, p. 720.

been his production, and none have been found in his handwriting. John Adams says in his *Diary*, after hearing the oration, "The composition, the pronunciation, the action, all exceeded the expectations of everybody. They exceeded even mine, which were very considerable."¹

The speaker, standing in the sacred desk, engaged the attention of the great assemblage in a well-chosen exordium, explained his sincere attachment to the interest of his country and his hearty detestation of every design formed against her liberties. In closing, he pointed out Samuel Adams who, as Moderator, was in full view, and "the vast multitude seemed to promise that in all succeeding times the great patriot's name and 'the roll of fellow-patriots should grace the annals of history.'"² Christopher Monk, who had been dreadfully wounded in the Massacre, was present, and, as the meeting broke up, "a very generous collection" was taken up for the cripple, — "a shocking monument of that horrid transaction." A committee, with Samuel Adams at their head, were appointed to wait on the orator with the thanks of the town for his elegant and spirited oration, and also to request a copy of it for the press, and "the thanks of the town were unanimously voted to Adams for his good services as Moderator." The *Gazette* adds, "As this anniversary happened on Saturday, the evening of which is considered by many persons as the commencement of the Sabbath, the exhibition of portraits of the murderers and the slaughtered citizens was put off till this [Monday] evening, when they will be exposed to public view at Mrs. Chapman's in King Street." This exhibition had been customary on each anniversary of the Massacre.³

Shortly after the great fire of 1711, in which much of the business portion of the city was destroyed, an act passed the Legislature for the appointment of fire-wards in Boston. These officers were not to exceed ten in number. They

¹ John Adams's *Diary*, March 5, 1774 (*Works*, II. 332).

² Bancroft, VI. 508.

³ Boston *Gazette*, March 7, 1774.

carried a distinguishing badge during a fire, which was a red staff, five feet in length, headed with a brass spire six inches long.¹ There are yet living persons who can remember the old fire-wardens and their superintending services at a conflagration, where they seem to have had the direction of all work, and could order the blowing up of buildings. For some years prior to the Revolution these offices were held by the leading citizens of Boston, whether as a special mark of honor, or with a view of setting a proper example to the towns-people generally, does not appear. In March of this year, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, William Cooper, and John Scollay were among the fire-wardens.² Adams had served in the same capacity several years before. Very little of detail has been preserved relative to the method of extinguishing fires in the olden time. A fire-engine had been imported into the town in 1676, when a regular company was formed to take charge of it. In 1733, there were seven fire-engines in Boston, and, in 1765, one of home manufacture was tried and "found to perform extremely well."³ The church bells, as in later times, were rung as a general alarm; and besides the engines, "bags and buckets" for passing water appear to have been used, perhaps by organized companies. The town being built of wood was constantly liable to destruction, and the utmost vigilance was necessary. The office of fire-warden was evidently considered as demanding great discretion. Adams found time to serve in other common capacities such as this. He considered it the duty of every man to show his good citizenship by filling positions which demanded care and attention, though entirely unremunerative, and that the more prominent the citizen, the more incumbent it was for him to set a proper example.

Parliament was in session when the news of the destruction of the tea arrived in London. It was at a time when

¹ Drake's History of Boston, p. 542.

² Boston Gazette, March 21, 1774.

³ Drake's History of Boston, p. 691.

the national spirit and pride of the English people had been aroused by what was supposed to be a defiance from a dependent state. The Ministry were fully prepared for any measures of coercion. On the 7th of March, the proceedings at Boston were communicated in an address from the Throne to both Houses, in which the Americans were accused of attempting to injure the commerce of Great Britain, and to subvert its Constitution. The message was accompanied with a number of papers, containing copies and extracts of letters from the several royal Governors, showing that the opposition proceeded not from Boston alone, but was common to all the Colonies. Disregarding constitutional forms, which forbid that any should be condemned unheard, a bill was introduced on the 18th, after some debate, for suspending the trade, and closing the harbor of Boston during the pleasure of the King, — excluding it from the privilege of landing and discharging, or of loading and shipping goods, wares, and merchandise.

During the discussion, which extended through the month of March, Edmund Burke, Barré, Pownall, Rose Fuller, Byng, and others of lesser note, defended the Colonists, and opposed the bill with all the eloquence of genius inspired by a love of justice and a prophetic foresight of the consequences of driving their injured fellow-subjects to desperation ; but the policy which for ten years had been recklessly pursued, with but slight deviations from changes of Ministry, was not to be turned aside even by the most magnificent eloquence and reasoning of Burke. The blow must be dealt where the measures of resistance had originated, and whence it was supposed the example would strike terror into the rest of the continent without making the punishment more extensive ; and on the 29th the bill passed the House of Lords unanimously. Three weeks later the debate on American affairs was renewed on the question of repealing the tax on tea, when Burke electrified the Parliament with the greatest speech that had ever been heard. Even

that slight concession might have opened the path to conciliation, but it was not to be. The bill was defeated by a great majority. The duration of the Port Act was to depend on the conduct of the Bostonians, and would be relaxed whenever they should make compensation for the tea and otherwise satisfy the King of their willingness to submit. Franklin had meantime written a letter to Cushing, Samuel Adams, Hancock, and Phillips, the four Boston Representatives, with the view to conciliation, advising that compensation should be made to the East India Company before any compulsive measures were thought of.¹ But the advice, even had there been a disposition to act upon it, came too late.

The same Parliament, proceeding with its policy of crushing the Colonists into abject obedience, passed a bill in April "for the better regulating the government of Massachusetts Bay." This act so changed the Constitution of the Province as to wrest the whole executive power from the House of Representatives, making the Council elective by the Crown. Judicial officers were to be appointed or removed by the royal Governor; juries, instead of being chosen among the people, were to be nominated and summoned by the sheriffs; town meetings could only be convoked by the Governor, and nothing discussed at them beyond the topics specified by him. On comparing these measures with the repeated and urgent suggestions in the letters of Hutchinson to persons in authority in England, it becomes evident that they were adopted at his solicitation; and to him attaches the chief

¹ Bancroft, VI. 500, 501.

There is a story which seems to be well authenticated, that the well-known Whig, Colonel Bromfield, while visiting Samuel Adams, was shown a letter from Franklin, in which the advice was given to pay for the tea to avoid precipitating events. Among other remarks on this subject, Adams said, in conclusion: "Franklin may be a good philosopher, but he is a bungling politician." The fact was narrated by a nephew of Samuel Adams, Mr. Joseph Allen of Worcester, who had it many years since from Colonel Bromfield in person. The letter was probably that above referred to.

responsibility of producing the alienation of the Colonies from the mother country. His letters were, to a great extent, the basis upon which the fatal measures of government were founded. Arthur Lee had already written to Samuel Adams from London : —

“The present time is extremely critical with respect to the measures which this country will adopt relative to America. From the prevailing temper here, I think you ought to be prepared for the worst. It seems highly probable that an act of Parliament will pass this session, enabling his Majesty to appoint his Council in your Province. On Tuesday last the Earl of Buckinghamshire made a motion in the House of Lords for an address to the King, to lay before them the communications from Governor Hutchinson to the Secretary of State. He prefaced his motion with declaring that these papers were to be required merely out of form ; for that the insolent and outrageous conduct of that Province were so notorious, that the House might well proceed to punishment, without any further information or inquiry.”¹

With the belief that these measures could not be carried into execution without riots, a bill was passed for the impartial administration of justice, in the cases of persons questioned “for any acts done by them in the execution of the law, or for the suppression of riots and tumults in Massachusetts Bay.” In case any person was indicted in Massachusetts for murder or any other capital offence, and it should appear to the Governor that the fact was committed in the exercise or aid of magistracy, in suppressing tumults and riots, and that a fair trial could not be had in the Province, he should send the person so indicted to any other Colony or to Great Britain for trial, and special instructions were sent for the arrest at a proper and convenient time of Samuel Adams, above all others, as “the Chief of the Revolution.”² At the same time, the government of the Province was withdrawn from Hutchinson, and General Thomas Gage,

¹ A. Lee to S. Adams, Feb. 8, 1774.

² Bancroft, VI. 523.

late Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's forces in America, was appointed in his stead, and ordered to repair to Boston and assume his post, while the military force was to be increased. Thus was the cup of bitterness filled to the brim, and the people of the Colonies driven into an indissoluble union for the common defence.

While this memorable Parliament were perfecting their measures, the Legislature was prorogued in Massachusetts, and, as usual, the Committee of Correspondence continued to act in open defiance of the King's disapprobation. The Province, in fact, was virtually under the control of this democratic body of Provincial statesmen. Hutchinson's authority, as he admits, was little more than nominal. "All legislative as well as executive authority," he says, "was gone."¹ The last act of the late Assembly had been to direct their Committee of Correspondence to "transmit letters to the other Colonies and to Dr. Franklin on the subject of the Chief Justice receiving his salary from the Crown, the enormous extent of the powers of the Admiralty in America, and other matters which they should judge important to be communicated." Among the Adams papers remains his draft of a letter to the other Legislatures, in pursuance of this vote. After touching upon other matters, and deploring "the total silence of the sister Colonies" upon the subject of Parliamentary authority, he proceeds:—

"We have long been struggling with one grievance upon the back of another, but none seem to be so threatening to us and to all the Colonies as an attempt to render our Governor and the judges of the land independent of the people for their support. This appears to us to be the completion of the system of tyranny: for certainly that people must be slaves where another legislative claims and exercises the power of raising what moneys it pleases from them, and supporting an executive which is independent of them for their places or their continuation in office, out of the moneys thus taken from them without their consent. We cannot better convey to you

¹ Hutchinson's History, III. 455.

the sentiments of the House of Representatives of this Province upon this subject, than by enclosing their protest and resolves thereon. The House have lately petitioned for a removal of this grievance in special; but we have certain intelligence that their petitions are displeasing to his Majesty, because the principle is therein held up repugnant to the authority claimed by Parliament to make laws binding on the subject in America in all cases whatsoever. The power assumed and exercised by the British Parliament is, in truth, the foundation of the grievance. We have petitioned against it; and if we admit that they have this right, we have no ground of complaint.”¹

On the 28th, Adams, for a committee consisting of himself as chairman, and Hancock, Phillips, and Heath, prepared a long and explicit letter to Franklin in the name of Massachusetts, sending “her last instructions”² to her agent in England. Enclosing the proceedings of the two Houses of Assembly for Franklin’s fuller information, Adams takes a comprehensive review of the position of Britain and America, relatively to each other. The taxation acts, the illegal support of the judges, the refusal of the King to hear the petitions of Massachusetts, the independency of the Governor, the prejudices of the Ministry, and the consequent increase of angry feeling, are all clearly set forth, and the plainest deductions drawn from them.

“It will be vain,” continues Adams, “for any to expect that the people of this country will now be contented with a partial and temporary relief, or that they will be amused by Court promises, while they see not the least relaxation of grievances. By the vigilance and activity of committees of correspondence among the several towns in this Province, they have been wonderfully enlightened and animated. They are united in sentiment, and their opposition to unconstitutional measures of government is become systematical. Colony communicates freely with Colony. There is a common affection among them,—the *communis sensus*; and the whole continent

¹ Letter to the other Colonies by S. Adams. The draft is dated “Boston, March, 1774.

² Bancroft, VI. 508.

is now become united in sentiment and in opposition to tyranny. Their old good will and affection for the parent country is not, however, lost. If she returns to her former moderation and good humor, their affection will revive. They wish for nothing more than permanent union with her, upon the condition of equal liberty. This is all they have been contending for, and nothing short of this will, or ought to, satisfy them. When formerly the kings of England have encroached upon the liberties of their subjects, the subjects have thought it their duty to themselves and their posterity to contend with them till they were restored to the footing of the Constitution. The events of such struggles have sometimes proved fatal to crowned heads, — perhaps they have never issued but in establishments of the people's liberties.

“In those times it was not thought reasonable to say that, since the King had claimed such or such a power, the people *must* yield it to him, because it would not be for the honor of his Majesty to recede from his claim. If the people of Britain must needs flatter themselves that they collectively are the sovereign of America, America will never consent that they should govern them arbitrarily, or without known and stipulated rules. But the matter is not so considered here: Britain and the Colonies are considered as distinct governments under the King. Britain has a Constitution, the envy of all foreigners, to which it has ever been the safety, as well of kings as of subjects, steadfastly to adhere. Each Colony has also a Constitution in its charter or other institution of government, all of which agree in this, that the fundamental laws of the British Constitution shall be the basis. That Constitution by no means admits of legislation without representation. Why, then, should the Parliament of Britain which, notwithstanding all its ideas of transcendent power, must forever be circumscribed within the limits of that Constitution, insist upon the right of legislation for the people of America, without their having representation there? It cannot be justified by their own Constitution. The laws of nature and reason abhor it; yet, because she has claimed such a power, her honor truly is concerned still to assert and exercise it, and she may not recede. Will such kind of reasoning bear the test of examination? Or, rather, will it not be an eternal disgrace to any nation, which considers her honor concerned, to employ fleets and armies for the support of a claim which she cannot in reason defend, merely be-

cause she has once in anger made such a claim? It is the misfortune of Britain and the Colonies that flagitious men on both sides the water have made it their interest to foment divisions, jealousies, and animosities between them, which perhaps will never subside until the extent of power and right on each part is more explicitly stipulated than has ever yet been thought necessary; and, although such a stipulation should prove a lasting advantage on each side, yet considering that the views and designs of those men were to do infinite mischief, and to establish a tyranny upon the ruins of a free Constitution, they deserve the vengeance of the public, and until the memory of them shall be erased by time, they will most assuredly meet with the execrations of posterity.”¹

The letter then takes up the subject of the agent's salaries. The Governor's refusal to accede to them is considered insulting, as his action was grounded upon the hope that gentlemen in England, whose talents might be engaged for the Colonies under ordinary circumstances, would be discouraged from further serving them when persistently denied their just compensation. But this letter was written when the mad policy of trampling America under the armed heel of violence had already been decided upon in Parliament. The instructions to Franklin to make one more appeal for redress, and the news of the final fatal determination of the Ministry must have passed each other on the ocean. Almost at the same time that Burke with words like “burning oracles” was astonishing the nation with his wondrous eloquence in defence of the Colonies, and Lord Mansfield was

¹ The original by Samuel Adams is dated March 28, 1774. The copy in possession of Dr. A. L. Elwyn of Philadelphia, and published in the Collections of the Seventy-Six Society, is dated March 31. The fair copy differs in some slight particulars from the original.

Franklin served as agent of Massachusetts from the commencement of 1771 until near the close of the royal authority in the Province. The journals indicate that a number of official letters were written to him by the Assembly. Samuel Adams was on the committee for preparing nearly every one. The drafts of these are found among his papers, including the first and last, and also the draft of a letter from the town of Boston to Franklin before the latter was appointed agent, written in July, 1770.

urging that now "the sword is drawn, you must throw away the scabbard," Samuel Adams was depicting to his friend, Arthur Lee, in England, with the spirit of prophecy, the inevitable result. He foresaw the entire ruin of the liberties of America by the "lifting the whole power of the government from the hands in which the Constitution had placed it, into the hands of the King's ministers and their dependents."

"This," said he, "is, in a great measure, the case already; and the consequences will be angry debates in our senate and perpetual tumult and confusions abroad, until these maxims are entirely altered, or else, which God forbid, the spirits of the people are depressed, and they become inured to disgrace and servitude. This has long been the prospect in the minds of speculative men. The body of the people are now in council. Their opposition grows into a system. They are united and resolute. And if the British administration and government do not return to the principles of moderation and equity, the evil which they profess to aim at preventing, by their rigorous measures, will the sooner be brought to pass, viz. *the entire separation and independence of the Colonies.*¹

"Even imaginary power beyond right begets insolence. The people here, I am apt to think, will be satisfied on no other terms but those of redress, and they will hardly think they are upon equitable terms with the mother country, while, by a solemn act, she continues to claim a right to enslave them whenever she shall think fit to exercise it. I wish for a permanent union with the mother country, but only on the terms of liberty and truth. No advantage that can accrue to America from such an union can compensate for the loss of liberty. The time may come, sooner than they are aware of it, when the being of the British nation, I mean the being of its importance, however strange it may now appear to some, will depend on the union with America. It requires but a small portion of the gift of discernment for any to foresee that Providence will erect a

¹ Justice to the Colonies is here made the alternative. Yet Hutchinson, in a letter to Lord Dartmouth (July 10, 1773), says of the General Court then lately prorogued, "There are some who are ready to go all the lengths of the Chief Incendiary, who is determined, he says, to get rid of every governor who obstructs them in their course to independency."

mighty empire in America, and our posterity will have it recorded in history that their fathers migrated from an island in a distant part of the world, the inhabitants of which had long been revered for wisdom and valor. They grew rich and powerful; these emigrants increased in numbers and strength. But they were at last absorbed in luxury and dissipation; and, to support themselves in their vanity and extravagance, they coveted and seized the honest earnings of those industrious emigrants. This laid a foundation of distrust, animosity, and hatred, till the emigrants, feeling their own vigor and independence, dissolved every former band of connection between them, and the islanders sunk into obscurity and contempt.”¹

A part of the prophecy was verified in two years. The time for that “entire separation and independence of the Colonies” was at hand. It was the one aim of Adams, and he pursued it as the progress of events dictated and prudence seemed to warrant. The character of Samuel Adams presents itself at this epoch with increasing lustre. His wisdom and firmness appear in every important public act. “He had,” says a distinguished divine, “the eyes of Argus, and as many hands as Briareus, and in each hand a pen.” He was the centre around which the system revolved. Love for liberty truly pervaded the people, but all looked for guidance to Samuel Adams. Among the thousands whose hearts beat with generous enthusiasm for the great principles of human freedom, he stood forth conspicuous for sagacity, foresight, and that never-wearying industry which saw in great acts already accomplished only incentives for still further efforts. Nothing could for a moment distract his attention from the cause. No sophistry could deceive his discernment, no threats or impending dangers could appall him. He seemed to penetrate intuitively the designs of the Ministry and their agents in America.

With him, hand in hand, went the young and enthusiastic Joseph Warren, a noble, manly character, whose public services grow in importance as they are studied. In him was

¹ Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, April 4, 1774.

combined the impetuous ardor of youth with the coolness and wisdom of riper years. At once a powerful orator and an eloquent, logical writer, his influence was widely felt and acknowledged. He was the principal member of the Committee of Correspondence after Samuel Adams, and the two had no separate purposes in public measures. John Adams was about to quit the retirement of private life, and enter upon a field of action which was to lead on to the highest position in the gift of his countrymen, his career culminating with the close of the century. As yet, however, he remained practically but a spectator of the great events happening around him. John Hancock, heart and soul in the cause of his country, was ready to devote his all to her welfare, and aided with his great fortune to consummate the policy marked out by others. The Loyalists, in their letters, had represented the "faction" as composed of a few ambitious adventurers without property, and unsupported by people of consideration in the Province. As the wealthiest man in Boston, it was essential that he should be associated with all public measures, and his name frequently appears as the moderator of town meetings and on committees for preparing important papers. Generous, impulsive, and sincere in his support, he had the hearts of the people, and was yet to take the most prominent position in America in the glorious assertion of her liberties. Thomas Cushing, as Speaker of the House, had acquired in England a reputation for influence which, for a while, made him a special object of vengeance. But Cushing was a leader only in name. He possessed few of those popular qualities which enabled two or three others to guide and direct. His desire for a reconciliation, based upon his sincere love of country, prompted him to hold back from vigorous measures, and he sometimes feebly advised forbearance when delay would have been total ruin. His was not a character for decisive action; he possessed, more than any other man of his time, the art of obtaining information, to which may

be attributed his occasional interviews with Hutchinson, which the Governor repeatedly mentions in his letters to England. James Warren of Plymouth, Robert Treat Paine, and Joseph Hawley lived at some distance from Boston, and, except during the sessions of the Legislature, were generally absent from its scenes. James Bowdoin seems to have figured but slightly in any public events outside the Council, where his character, learning, and literary abilities stamped him as the leader. William Molineux, who died in October of this year, had for some time been recognized as an impetuous, fearless citizen, whose influence was especially exerted among the working-people, whom he could always command by his energetic style of harangue and his readiness to head any active movement. Josiah Quincy, next to Joseph Warren, was perhaps the closest friend and confidant of Samuel Adams, who sincerely admired his talents as a writer and speaker. After these, the most prominent actors at this time in Boston were Dr. Thomas Young, Oliver Wendell, William Cooper (the Town Clerk), Paul Revere, Nathaniel Barker, Dr. Benjamin Church, Jonathan Williams, Benjamin Kent, John Scollay, John Pitts, Richard Dana, John Rowe, Samuel Pemberton, John Ruddock, Gibbons Sharpe, William Phillips, Robert Pierpont, William Powell, and others of less note, whose actions were dependent generally upon the directions of the principal leaders. For several years previous to the Revolution these names appear as members of committees on great occasions where judgment and decision were demanded. An examination of the Town Records and the Journals of the Committee of Correspondence reveals the name of Samuel Adams almost always at the head of such committees from 1769 forward; and in the Assembly, the same general assent seems to have been accorded him as chairman of committees for preparing state papers.

To these should be added the ministers of Boston,—nearly all Congregationalists. With scarcely an exception

they urged, by example as well as precept, those principles of liberty and natural justice which formed the political creed of Boston. Since the death of Jonathan Mayhew, in 1766, Dr. Samuel Cooper had become the great theological luminary of Boston. His discourses were remarkable for their fervid patriotism and eloquence. Liberty as well as religion was his theme, and no man in New England was more thoroughly versed in the great political questions of the day. He corresponded at a later period with Franklin, and was intimate with every Massachusetts statesman. His views were broad, liberal, and humane, and his learning and acquaintance with several branches of science, as well as his refined taste, caused his company to be much sought after in social circles. On extraordinary occasions, when public meetings were to be opened with prayer, Dr. Cooper was generally desired to officiate. Dr. Charles Chauncy, who was a near friend of Samuel Adams, was no less ardently devoted to the civil and religious liberty of his country. He was a plain, unpretending preacher, sincere and outspoken, and often extravagant, but all knew him to be the honest friend of virtue. Each congregation in Boston listened weekly to the precepts of patriot ministers, who fearlessly announced and defended human rights, as transmitted to them by their ancestors. With these teachers, the people of Boston grew to be the champions of liberty for the world, and, led by Samuel Adams, were willing, if need be, to offer themselves a sacrifice for the freedom of mankind.

An engraving of Samuel Adams, by Paul Revere, appeared in the April number of the *Royal American Magazine* this year, evidently taken from the Copley painting, then in John Hancock's house. It is a rough specimen of the art, and has but a slight trace of the majestic character contained in the work of the eminent painter, but the likeness is sufficiently preserved to show the determined energy and resolute bearing of the original.¹ The patriot engraver and

¹ The author is indebted to Samuel G. Drake, Esq., of Boston, for this and other interesting memorials of Samuel Adams.

goldsmith always remembered Samuel Adams as the "political father." Adams engaged his services, whenever it was possible, for emergencies and confidential business, where courage and skill were required. He was sometimes admitted to the conferences of the Committee of Correspondence, and usually rode express with the circulars from Boston to distant places. The committee gave him their fullest confidence. He lived to see them all pass to their reward, while he survived to recount the adventures of a by-gone generation. As soldier, artist, and mechanic, his deeds wrought into narrative would form volumes of exciting events, associated with America's greatest characters.¹

During the month of March a riot had occurred in Marblehead, owing to the location of a small-pox hospital there, which resulted in the burning of the building with all its furniture. The circumstance was peculiarly mortifying to the friends of liberty, as it tended to weaken the popular party and strengthen their enemies. A petition from the proprietors of the building had been sent to the Assembly, asking for armed assistance against the mob. Elbridge Gerry communicated the facts to Samuel Adams, who, as the biographer of Gerry says, "like the father of the faithful, guarded with unceasing watchfulness every avenue to danger." Adams did not reply at once, having reason to believe that "the storm, though it raged with so much violence, would soon spend itself, and a calm ensue." The subject was one of peculiar delicacy, and it is not unlikely that the influence of Adams was exerted in the House to prevent immediate action upon the petition. He was unwilling that the enemy should have it to say that "the friends of liberty themselves were obliged to have recourse even to military aid to protect them from the fury of an ungoverned mob." He believed that the ill-feeling among the people of Marblehead would soon cease, and the event proved the wisdom of his advice.

¹ See the frontispiece of this volume.

But connected with this affair was a matter which gave Mr. Adams much more concern than the existence of temporary disturbances.¹ This was a resolution of the Committee of Correspondence of Marblehead, that they would no longer serve in that capacity. The consequence of such an act, emanating from a large and important town, might prove disastrous by example. The parent Committee at Boston, therefore, sent a long letter to that of Marblehead, eloquently depicting the fatal tendencies of their resignation. The style and language is that of Adams, and his peculiar art of harmonizing differences and appealing to the judgment and reason of men is apparent throughout. As their town had not at the late meeting seen cause to fill the vacancies, the letter begs leave still to address the Committee of Correspondence in that character. This had the desired effect. No further disaffection is mentioned; and four months afterwards Adams was in correspondence with the Marblehead Committee, when he acknowledged the receipt of donations collected by them for the poor of Boston, who were suffering under the rigors of the Port Act.

The people of Massachusetts were meanwhile preparing for the approaching crisis. Military companies were organized, and everywhere men were learning the use of firearms under officers of their own choosing.² At the close of the late session, the Assembly had resolved that the Commissary-General be directed to purchase five hundred barrels of gunpowder "for his Majesty's safety in the service of the Province, and that the said gunpowder be deposited in the magazines in Boston and Charlestown, to be there kept for the use of the Province." Political thinkers saw that, unless the Ministry and Parliament receded from their unjust claims, an armed contest must ensue.

On the 10th of May, the news arrived in Boston of the passage of the act of Parliament for closing the harbor, and that the seat of government was to be transferred to Salem.

¹ Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 38 - 42.

² Hutchinson, III. 455.

The Committee of Correspondence immediately convened, and sent forth by the hand of Joseph Warren a circular to the committees of the eight neighboring towns for a convention to be held in Boston on the 12th. The news had reached the people on their election-day. How that election was likely to go is foreshadowed in the brief and significant record found in the journal of the Caucus Club for the evening of the 7th, when Samuel Adams was Moderator.

"Voted: Same Representatives as last year."

This was equivalent to an election, for the club was governed by the known wishes of the leading spirits, and its influence extended far and wide among the people. Of the five hundred and thirty-six votes cast, Hancock received all, Adams all but one, Phillips all but two, and Cushing lacked twelve of a unanimous vote. The town record for this day says: "The choice of Representatives being over, and declared by the selectmen, the inhabitants were directed to withdraw and bring in their votes for a moderator of this meeting, in order that the town may proceed in transacting the other affairs mentioned in the warrant. Accordingly the inhabitants withdrew and brought in their votes, and, upon sorting them, it appeared that Mr. Samuel Adams was chosen."¹ Whether any cognizance was now taken of the news from England does not appear by the record.

On Thursday, the 12th, at noon, the Boston Committee of Correspondence again met, and voted "that the selectmen of the town be desired to call a meeting of the inhabitants for the following day, to consider the important and interesting news lately received from England." A committee, consisting of Samuel Adams, Joseph Warren, and Joseph Greenleaf, was chosen to prepare a circular letter to be sent to the committees of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, acquainting them with the late act of Parliament for block-

¹ Boston Town Records for May 10, 1774.

ading the harbor of Boston and annihilating the trade of the town.¹

At three o'clock on the afternoon of the same day, the committees from the towns which had been summoned on the 10th, assembled at Faneuil Hall with the Boston Committee. Charlestown, Cambridge, Newton, Brookline, Roxbury, Dorchester, Lynn, and Lexington were represented. Samuel Adams was chosen chairman of the convention. Joseph Warren had prepared a report, in which the eight towns unanimously agreed upon the injustice and cruelty of the act. The proceedings were open to the public, and it was in reality a "town meeting," for on that day, replying to a letter from Elbridge Gerry of the same date, Samuel Adams says: "I duly received your excellent letter of this day while I was in the town meeting. I read it there to the great satisfaction of my townsmen, in as full a town meeting as we have ever had."² The convention concurred in the measures proposed by the Boston Committee, including that of the circular letter; and to the suggestion that the trade of the town could be recovered by paying for the tea, resolved that it was unworthy even to notice the humiliating offer.

"From our abhorrence," said they, "of the above-named extraordinary and oppressive act, we consider ourselves as under the strongest obligations to exert our utmost efforts by all constitutional means to relieve our suffering brethren in Boston, and to unite with them in every legal and salutary measure to extricate them from their embarrassed situation."³

The circular letter submitted by the Boston Committee, which the convention now made its own, was written by Samuel Adams. It is addressed to the Committees of Correspondence of the Colonies first named, and signed by the Town Clerk of Boston with the concurrence of the eight

¹ Journal of the Committee of Correspondence for May 12, 1774.

² Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 45.

³ Journal of the Committee of Correspondence for May 12, 1774.

towns represented. The paper having pointed out the injustice and cruelty of the act by which the inhabitants had been condemned unheard, proceeds : —

“ They have ordered our port to be entirely shut up, leaving us barely so much of the means of subsistence as to keep us from perishing with cold and hunger ; and it is said that a fleet of British ships of war is to block up our harbor until we shall make restitution to the East India Company for the loss of their tea, which was destroyed therein the winter past, obedience is paid to the laws and authority of Great Britain, and the revenue is duly collected. The act fills the inhabitants with indignation. The more thinking part of those who have hitherto been in favor of the measures of the British government look upon it as not to have been expected, even from a barbarous state. This attack, though made immediately upon us, is doubtless designed for every other Colony who shall not surrender their sacred rights and liberties into the hands of an infamous Ministry. Now, therefore, is the time when *all* should be united in opposition to this violation of the liberties of all. We are well informed that another bill is to be brought into Parliament to distinguish this from the other Colonies, by repealing some of the acts which have been complained of, and ease the American trade ; but be assured *you* will be called upon to surrender your rights, even if they should succeed in their attempt to suppress the spirit of liberty *here*.

“ The single question then is, whether you consider Boston as now suffering in the common cause, and sensibly feel and resent the injury and affront offered to her. If you do, and we cannot believe otherwise, may we not, from your approbation of our former conduct in defence of American liberty, rely on your suspending your trade with Great Britain at least, which it is acknowledged will be a great but necessary sacrifice to the cause of liberty, and will effectually defeat the design of this act of revenge. If this should be done, you will please consider it will be through a voluntary suffering, greatly short of what we are called to endure from the immediate hand of tyranny.

“ We desire your answer by the bearer ; and after assuring you that, not in the least intimidated by this inhuman treatment, we are still determined to maintain to the utmost of our abilities the rights

of America. We are, gentlemen, your friends and fellow-countrymen."¹

The extraordinary effect of this appeal upon the whole continent it is not easy to describe. It can only be fully understood by a perusal of the documents and letters of that time. But it is not too much to assert that no paper ever sent out from one Colony to another produced such results. It was in fact putting all America on its honor and manhood to stand by the beleaguered defenders of the common citadel. No community not entirely lost to the dictates of justice and humanity could be deaf to the cry which came up so touchingly from those who were now devoted to the vengeance of the most powerful nation on earth. Accordingly we find the people of nearly every Colony coming together during the summer, and everywhere adopting resolutions of sympathy with Boston, and particularly repeating its pathetic words, that they should not be left to suffer alone, and that Boston must be considered as "suffering in the common cause." This expression seems to have gone through America like an electric shock, and all the efforts of Adams by committees and circular letters, during the past six years, to bring about a general union, never effected so much as this accomplished in three months. Resolutions of towns and counties, responses from local as well as intercolonial Committees of Correspondence, and the resolves of Legislature, one and all contained that talismanic sentence in their replies. "Boston must be regarded as suffering in the common cause," suddenly became a continental watchword, — not the mere ebullition of the moment, but supported by encouraging advice and generous deeds. Private letters to England, written during the summer, repeated it, and the royal Governors, from New England

¹ The original draft is in the handwriting of Samuel Adams. The fair copy, also, in his handwriting, is dated May 13, 1774, — the day after its adoption by the convention of committees.

to Georgia, in their despatches told the Ministry of the complete unanimity of the Colonies, and that Boston's appeal to the continent had elicited the reply from far and near, that she would be sustained as "suffering in the common cause."¹

¹ See Force's *American Archives*, Fourth Series, Vol. I. "Correspondence and Proceedings" through the summer of 1774.

CHAPTER XXX.

Adams presides at a Town Meeting to consider the Port Act. — A CONTINENTAL NON-IMPORTATION LEAGUE proposed. — He drafts an Appeal to the several Assemblies. — General Gage arrives and assumes Command of the Province. — His Instructions from the Earl of Dartmouth. — The Seat of Government changed to Salem. — The Ringleaders to be punished. — The Port Act goes into Operation. — Hutchinson sails for England. — Meeting of the Assembly at Salem. — Intrepidity of Adams. — He sounds the principal Members and matures his Plans. — He proposes a CONTINENTAL CONGRESS to meet at Philadelphia. — Startling Effect upon the Assembly. — He locks the Door and keeps the Key. — The Governor's Messenger denied Admission. — The Adamses, Cushing, and Paine chosen Delegates. — Circulars sent to the other Assemblies. — Dissolution of the Last Assembly under the Royal Government. — John Adams enters upon his Public Career.

THUS far the proceedings against the infamous act had been directed solely by the several Committees of Correspondence. It remained for the people of Boston, as a corporate body, to take action. We have already seen the Committee moving the selectmen for a town meeting. In accordance with that desire the meeting was called for Friday, the 13th, when a numerous assemblage convened at Faneuil Hall; Samuel Adams as usual presiding, and the eloquent Dr. Cooper opening the meeting with prayer. The edict was then read in a loud, clear voice, by Cooper, the town clerk, fully discussed, and pronounced "repugnant to law, religion, and common sense." The Tories, many of whom were present, improved this occasion to represent in glowing colors the distress and misery which must shortly ensue among the tradesmen and working-people under the act, and enlarged upon the apparent simplicity of the conditions, by which these calamities might be averted. A partial disposition was thus created among the timid to comply with the terms and compensate the East India Company. Had this course prevailed, it would have been a virtual

acknowledgment that the destruction of the tea was wrong, and the whole principle for which they had contended would have been lost ; for, as Adams had often said, to yield any portion, however small, was to yield the whole. The meeting finally voted, that, "if the other Colonies came into a JOINT resolution to stop all importations from Great Britain and every part of the West Indies until the act for blocking up this harbor be repealed, the same will prove the salvation of North America and her liberties. On the other hand, if they continue their exports and imports, there is high reason to fear that fraud, power, and the most odious oppression will rise triumphant over right, justice, social happiness, and freedom." The Moderator was then requested to transmit this vote "to all the sister Colonies in the name and behalf of the town, which he did on the following day in a letter to each of the Assemblies on the continent.¹

"The people," says Adams in this paper, "receive the edict with indignation. It is expected by their enemies, and feared by some of their friends, that this town singly will not be able to support the cause under so severe a trial. As the very being of every Colony, considered as a free people, depends upon the event, a thought so dishonorable to our brethren cannot be entertained as that this town will be left to struggle alone."

The next day Paul Revere started as a post-rider for Philadelphia, where he arrived on the 20th, having left a copy of the circular at New York on the way. Two or three hundred people met at Philadelphia, and, after reading the letter, appointed a committee to reply. They considered Boston as suffering in the common cause, recommended a general congress of deputies to state the rights of the Colonists, promised to collect the sentiments of the other Colonies on the subject, and expressed themselves as opposed to paying for the tea. The answers from every source held out the warmest sympathy for Boston, and a general willingness was man-

¹ Town Records for May, 1774. Bancroft, VII. 37.

ifested to sustain her in the hour of trial. The messenger had also in charge the Circular Letter from the convention of committees to the intercolonial Committees of Correspondence. At the same time Samuel Adams directed a letter to his friend James Warren of Plymouth :—

“The people,” he says, repeating the words of his Circular Letter to the Colonies, “receive this cruel edict with abhorrence and indignation. They consider themselves as suffering the stroke of ministerial, I may more precisely say Hutchinsonian vengeance, in the common cause of America. I hope they will sustain the blow with a becoming fortitude, and that the cursed design of intimidating and subduing the spirits of all America will, by the joint efforts of *all*, be frustrated. It is the expectation of our enemies, and some of our friends are afraid that this town *singly* will not be able to support the cause under so severe a trial. Did not the very being of every seaport town, and indeed of every Colony, considered as a free people, depend upon it, I would not even entertain a thought so dishonorable of them as that they would leave us now to struggle alone.

“I enclose you a copy of a vote passed by this town at a very full meeting yesterday, which stands adjourned till Wednesday next, to receive the report of a committee appointed to consider what is proper further to be done. The inhabitants, in general, abhor the thought of paying for the tea, which is one condition upon which we are to be restored to the grace and favor of Great Britain. Our Committee of Correspondence have written letters to our friends in the Southern Colonies, and they are about writing to the several towns in this Province. The merchants of Newburyport have exhibited a noble example of public spirit, in resolving that, if the other seaport towns in this Province alone will come into the measure, they will not trade to the southward of South Carolina nor to any part of Great Britain and Ireland, till the harbor of Boston is again open and free, or till the disputes between Britain and the Colonies are settled upon such terms as all rational men ought to contend for. This is a manly and generous resolution. I wish Plymouth, which has hitherto stood foremost, would now condescend to second Newburyport. Such a determination, put into practice, would alter the views of the nation, who are in full expectation

that Boston will be unthought of by the rest of the continent, and even of this Province, and left, as they are, devoted to ruin. The heroes who first trod on your shore fed on clams and muscles, and were contented. The country which they explored and defended with their richest blood, and which they transmitted as an inheritance to their posterity, affords us superabundance of provision. Will it not be an eternal disgrace to this generation if it should now be surrendered to that people, who, if we must judge of them by one of their laws, are barbarians. *Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit? Barbarus has segetes?* If our brethren feel and resent the affront and injury now offered to this town, if they realize of how great importance it is to the liberties of America that Boston should sustain this shock with dignity, if they recollect their own resolutions to defend the public liberty *at the expense of their fortunes and lives*, they cannot fail to contribute their aid by a temporary suspension of their trade.”¹

While the town meeting of the 13th was sending forth its appeal to the sister Colonies for union and sympathy, the frigate *Lively* was sailing up the harbor with General Gage, as Governor of Massachusetts and Commander-in-Chief of the Continent. A few days afterwards, he wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth: “The Act for shutting up the port got here before me, and a town meeting was holding to consider it at the time of my arrival in the harbor.”² When the ship anchored, Gage proceeded immediately to Castle William, where, in accordance with his instructions, he had an interview with Hutchinson, who remained there with him. One contemporary account says, the members of the Council were summoned and addressed by the Captain-General on public affairs. On Tuesday, the 17th, he landed at Long Wharf amidst the discharge of cannon from ships and batteries. He was met by a number of the members of both Houses and many principal gentlemen of the town, and was escorted by the Boston Cadets, who were under arms await-

¹ S. Adams to James Warren, May 14, 1774 (Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections, Fourth Series, IV. 390).

² Gen. Gage to the Earl of Dartmouth, May 19, 1774.

ing his arrival, commanded by John Hancock. His commission was borne before him in the procession. Several military companies of horse and foot were drawn up in King Street, who saluted him as he passed, and his Excellency politely returned the courtesies. He entered the Council Chamber and his commission was read, and, after the usual ceremonies, he was sworn in by the President of the Council. A proclamation was then read by the High-Sheriff in the balcony of the State-House, continuing all officers in their places till further orders, which was answered by cheers, and firing of cannon from the batteries and company of artillery, and three volleys from the respective companies. An excellent entertainment was provided at Faneuil Hall, which was attended by members of the Council, "several of the Representatives," a number of the clergy and other respectable gentlemen. Many loyal toasts were drunk, and the strictest harmony and decorum observed. After dinner, his Excellency rode in a carriage to the Province-House.¹ Such is the account given in the Boston Evening Post of Gage's reception. It was marked with all the formality possible, with the view of overawing the spectators, but it is easy to see that the people looked on with coldness. The day was stormy, the heavens lowering over the scene, as if lamenting the miseries which were about enveloping the land. But the "rain and badness of the day" could not prevent a vast concourse of people from assembling to view the pageant.

The portraits of Gage indicate his character; affable and mild, but of feeble will, and without spirit to carry out the measures of his master. It was expected that he would have force of character sufficient to produce a salutary effect upon the refractory people of Boston, and his orders for the arrest of the leaders were explicit enough.

"Your authority as first magistrate," said Dartmouth in his in-

¹ Boston Evening Post, May 23, 1774, and Boston Gazette of the same date.

structions from the King to the Captain-General, "combined with the command over the King's troops, will, it is hoped, enable you to meet every opposition, and fully to preserve the public peace, by employing those troops with effect, should the madness of the people on the one hand, or the timidity or want of strength of the peace-officers on the other, make it necessary to have recourse to their assistance.

"The proceedings of the body of the people at the town of Boston in the months of November and December last were of such a nature and criminality as to have fixed a deep degree of guilt upon those who were the principal ringleaders and abettors of those proceedings. . . . The King considers the punishment of those offenders as a very necessary and essential example to others of the ill consequences that must follow from such an open and arbitrary usurpation, as to tend to the subversion of all government and the rendering civil liberty unsafe and precarious."¹

Lord North, too, in presenting to the House of Commons Hutchinson's letters containing the proceedings of the late session of the Massachusetts Legislature, had marked out "the ringleaders and forerunners of these mischiefs" for condign punishment, and, said he, "a prosecution has already been ordered against them by his Majesty's servants."²

But though Gage soon had large accessions to the military force, he feared to proceed to extremities. A gentleman in New York wrote to a friend in Scotland soon after the inception of these measures. "Should the import of this bill prove to be what is surmised of it, viz. the sending home those suspected or charged with any act against government to stand trial in Westminster Hall, you must not be surprised to find all America in flames."³ The seizure of either of the principal leaders would have been the signal for a general uprising, which was now only prevented by the habitual respect accorded to the counsels of the guiding spirits.

¹ Earl of Dartmouth's instructions to Gage, April 9, 1774.

² Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 113.

³ *Ibid.*, col. 302.

The day after Gage's reception, Samuel Adams addressed a letter to Arthur Lee, in reply to one probably received by the vessel which had brought the new Governor. Referring to the Port Act, he says : —

“ For flagrant injustice and barbarity, one might search in vain among the archives of Constantinople to find a match for it. But what else could have been expected from a Parliament too long under the dictates and control of an administration which seems to be totally lost to all sense and feeling of morality, and governed by passion, cruelty, and revenge? For us to reason against such an act would be idleness. Our business is to find means to evade its malignant design. The inhabitants view it, not with astonishment, but indignation. They discover the utmost contempt of the framers of it, while they are yet disposed to consider the body of the nation (though represented by such a Parliament) in the character they have sustained heretofore, humane and generous. They resent the behavior of the merchants in London, those I mean who receive their bread from them, in infamously deserting their cause at the time of extremity. They can easily believe that the industrious manufacturers, whose time is wholly spent in their various employments, are misled and imposed upon by such miscreants as have ungratefully devoted themselves to an abandoned Ministry, not regarding the ruin of those who have been their best benefactors.

“ But the inhabitants of this town must and will look to their own safety, which they see does not consist in a servile compliance with the ignominious terms of this barbarous edict. Though the means of preserving their liberties should distress and even ruin the British manufacturers, they are resolved (but with reluctance) to try the experiment. To this they are impelled by motives of self-preservation. They feel humanely to those who must suffer, but, being innocent, are not the objects of their revenge. They have already called upon their sister Colonies (as you will see by the enclosed note¹), who not only feel for them as fellow-citizens, but look upon

¹ The “ enclosed note ” was his own circular to the several Assemblies, and its effects were presently seen. Lieutenant-Governor Bull, writing to the Earl of Dartmouth from Charleston, S. C., July, 1774, says : “ I had expectations that the measures taken by the Parliament, relative to Boston, would have had some happy effect towards composing the disturbances in this Province, which

them as suffering the stroke of ministerial vengeance in the common cause of America; that cause which the Colonies have pledged themselves to each other not to give up. In the mean time I trust in God this devoted town will sustain the shock with dignity, and, supported by their brethren, will gloriously defeat the designs of their common enemies. Calmness, courage, and unanimity prevail. While they are resolved not tamely to submit, they will, by refraining from any acts of violence, avoid the snare that they discover to be laid for them by posting regiments so near them."¹

Hutchinson, now shorn of his titles, and supplanted by a Captain-General with absolute power over the lives of the Americans, was reduced to little more than an idle spectator of the movements of government. Save as an adviser, he was at last powerless for mischief, and only awaited the sailing of the first vessel, to leave forever the shore of a country on the verge of a devastating war brought on chiefly by his own infamous machinations. He now looked forward, however, with no misgivings on his own account, and even anticipated political preferment as the reward of his treachery and misrepresentations. A few days before his departure, a number of Tory merchants and traders, one hundred and twenty in number, addressed him in a strain of fulsome adulation, lamenting the loss of so good a Governor, protesting against the destruction of the tea, and offering to bear their proportion of whatever damages might be assessed for the East India Company. Among the signers were Harrison Gray, father and son, John Singleton Copley, Samuel H. Sparhawk, and others well known in the town.² Hutchinson returned answers to this and a similar document from a number of lawyers, promising to

seemed to have subsided a little last winter, but it has taken a contrary turn. Their own apprehensions and thoughts, confirmed by the resolutions and correspondence from the other Colonies, have raised a universal spirit of jealousy against Great Britain and of unanimity towards each other; I say universal, my Lord, for few who think otherwise are hardy enough to avow it publicly."

¹ S. Adams to A. Lee, May 18, 1774.

² Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 362.

exert himself for them on his arrival in England. A protest, signed by the merchants and traders of Boston, as voted unanimously at a very full town meeting, was published immediately after this, claiming that the adulatory address had been "handed about and signed in a private manner by sundry persons, who style themselves merchants." They "utterly disclaim the address and disavow a measure so clandestinely conducted, and so injurious in its tendency." The ex-Governor sailed for England on the 1st of June, and the Gazette chronicled the departure of "Thomas Hutchinson, Esq."¹

The last Legislature of Massachusetts under the royal charter met at Boston on the 26th of May. Many had felt sad with the apprehension that the late election would be the last of the kind, and the same feeling must have prevailed as to the Assembly. The change from Hutchinson to Gage was from bad to worse, as far as arbitrary measures were concerned, though the new Governor harbored no such personal animosities as rankled in the breast of Hutchinson. In his opening address he notified the two Houses that, on the 1st of June, he should remove the Legislature to Salem by royal command, and recommended their attention to the general business of the session. No immediate reply was made, and the temper of Gage soon displayed itself in his action with the newly elected Councillors, of whom he rejected no less than thirteen, among them Bowdoin, Dexter, Phillips, and John Adams.²

We have already traced the origin of the Congress of 1774 to Samuel Adams, who, as early as January, 1773, had entertained the idea (evidently no new conception even at that time), and all through the summer of that year had been agitating it in the Gazette and private correspondence. The idea, opposed at first by some less decided characters,³ but gradually supported by the great majority, was now regarded

¹ Boston Gazette, June 6, 1774.

² Journal of the House for 1774.

³ See, *ante*, II. 81, etc.

with general favor, and it was expected that Massachusetts would fix the time and place for the meeting.¹ The New York Committee of Correspondence had already proposed a "general Congress," and sent their proposal formally to the other Colonies. Samuel Adams was prepared to act in Boston, and on the 28th of May was on the point of introducing resolutions for a Congress of deputies from the several Provinces to convene at Philadelphia, when the Governor unexpectedly prorogued the Assembly to meet early in the next month at Salem.²

Gage was in doubt for a few days after his arrival, as to the prudence of attempting to enforce the Port Act. The naval and revenue officers, however, with whom he conversed, advised him to proceed with firmness, and on the 1st day of June, at noon, the Custom-House was closed;³ the harbor shut up against all inward bound vessels, and, after the 14th, none were allowed to depart. The bells were solemnly tolled, and every appropriate token of mourning shown by the people, and, even in Virginia, the public sentiment declared itself in fasting and prayer. In Philadelphia business ceased for the day, nine tenths of the inhabitants, excepting the Quakers, closed their houses, and the bells were tolled muffled.⁴ Bancroft thus graphically pictures the sudden transformation of an industrious, thriving town into a scene of idleness and want: —

"The inhabitants of the town were chiefly traders, shipwrights, and sailors; and since no anchor could be weighed, no sail unfurled, no vessel so much as launched from the stocks, their cheerful industry was at an end. No more are they to lay the keel of the fleet merchantman, or shape the rib symmetrically for its frame, or strengthen the graceful hull by knees of oak, or rig the well-proportioned masts, or bend the sails to the yard. The King of that country has changed the busy workshops into scenes of compulsory idleness, and the most skilful naval artisans in the world, with the

¹ Bancroft, VII. 62.

² Compare Barry's Massachusetts, II. 481.

³ Bancroft, VII. 48.

⁴ Gordon, I. 364.

keenest eye for forms of beauty and speed, are forced by act of Parliament to fold their hands. Want scowled on the laborer as he sat with his wife and children at his board. The sailor roamed the streets listlessly, without hope of employment. The law was executed with a rigor that went beyond the intentions of its authors. Not a scow could be manned by oars, to bring an ox or a sheep or a bundle of hay from the islands. All water-carriage from pier to pier, though but of lumber, or bricks, or lime, was strictly forbidden. The boats between Charlestown and Boston could not ferry a parcel of goods across Charles River; the fishermen of Marblehead, when from their hard pursuit they bestowed quintals of dried fish on the poor of Boston, were obliged to transport their offering in wagons by a circuit of thirty miles. The warehouses of the thrifty merchants were at once made valueless; the costly wharves, which extended far into the channel, and were so lately covered with the produce of the tropics and with English fabrics, were become solitary places; the harbor, which had resounded incessantly with the cheering voices of prosperous commerce, was now disturbed by no sounds but from British vessels of war.”¹

But the prayer of Boston in her hour of distress was heard. Before the act went into force, the dreadful consequences to the poor had been foreseen; on the 13th of May, Samuel Adams had prepared the pathetic appeal which elicited such cheering replies; and measures were taken at the town meeting, in anticipation, for the relief of those who, from loss of employment, would be the first to encounter want.² On the day after the act went into operation, news arrived of the passage of two bills, one arbitrarily changing the charter, and the other sustaining the army in any deeds of violence in enforcing the new system. The people met their hard fate with a dignity which felt the responsibility of a nation's wrongs, and which would not endanger the event by any act of precipitation. The letter from Philadelphia had offered sympathy, but advised the people of Massachusetts to satisfy the demands of the East India Company, if that would put an end to the controversy and restore consti-

¹ Bancroft, VII. 56, 57.

² Bancroft, VII. 37.

tutional liberty.¹ This was received in Boston with impatience, but Samuel Adams suppressed all murmurs. "I am fully of the Farmer's sentiments," said he; "violence and submission would at this time be equally fatal"; and, says Bancroft, "he exerted himself the more to promote the immediate suspension of commerce."

Soon after the news arrived of the two additional acts, the Committee of Correspondence held a meeting, and, on the 5th of June, Joseph Warren reported a "Solemn League and Covenant" for the suspension of all commerce with the Island of Great Britain until the repeal of the Port Act and the restoration of the charter rights of the Colony. The subscribers agreed that they would not purchase or consume, nor suffer others to purchase or consume, merchandise which should arrive from Great Britain after the last day of August next ensuing. Those who should refuse to sign the agreement were to be considered in the same light as "contumacious importers"; all commercial connections with them were to be withdrawn forever, and their names were to be published to the world.² Copies were sent to every town in Massachusetts for subscription, and, though laughed at by the Tories at first, soon became more formidable than any non-consumption agreement that had yet been set in motion.

In accordance with the proclamation of the Governor, the Legislature met at Salem on the 7th of June. Samuel Adams hastened from the committee-room at Boston, where he had been engaged up to the last moment in arranging the details for an ensuing meeting; but, being detained on the way, he did not reach the hall in the new seat of government, where the Assembly had gathered, until some time after the appointed hour for opening the Court. The Tories, who had grown unusually bold since the arrival of a military Governor, could not conceal their exultation at his pro-

¹ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 341, 342. Bancroft, VII. 47.

² Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 398.

longed absence, and asserted that he was afraid to trust himself outside of Boston. Some of them asked sneeringly, "Where is your leader?" The Whig party began to be alarmed at his absence, coupling it with the recent threats of a seizure of some of the patriot chiefs. A report was, in fact, current in Salem that Adams and Hancock had been arrested that day, and were to be shipped to England for trial. Their suspense was not of long duration. While the subject was discussed, Adams arrived and entered the hall, where, besides the members, were a throng of spectators, both Whigs and Tories, who had been attracted by the novelty of the situation and the belief that the House was about to adopt some extraordinary measures relative to the Port Act. A member of the administration party, in a gold-laced coat, pressed by the crowd, had taken the place assigned to the Clerk of the House, and, with an air of insolent assurance, seemed disposed to retain the seat. Adams, bending his gaze intently on the intruder and a group who surrounded him, said in his clear and emphatic tone: "Mr. Speaker, where is the place for your Clerk?" The eyes of the assemblage followed those of Adams, and, after a momentary silence, the Speaker directed him to the chair and desk which had been prepared. "Sir," said he, "my company will not be pleasant to the gentlemen who occupy it. I trust they will remove to another part of the House." The tone and bearing of the man had its effect. The request was complied with, and Adams, commencing his accustomed duties, soon effaced any impression as to his having been delayed by his fears.¹

Both Houses replied to the Governor's opening speech. The Assembly protested against the arbitrary removal of the Court from its legal and accustomed place at Boston. The Council, in a respectful message on the 9th, announced their loyalty to their sovereign, their invincible attachment to their rights and liberties, and expressed the wish that the

¹ Account by an eyewitness of the scene.

principles and general conduct of Gage's administration might be a happy contrast to that of his two immediate predecessors. At this point of the reading the Governor interrupted the chairman, refusing to receive an address reflecting upon his predecessors, and soon after sent the Council a bitter message, denouncing the address as an insult upon his Majesty and the Lords of the Privy Council, and an affront to himself.¹

Having been foiled in his proposed measure of a general Congress by the prorogation of the General Assembly in the last month, Samuel Adams kept the subject constantly in view at Salem, and was prepared to introduce it when the proper moment should arrive. Caution, however, was necessary; for at the slightest inkling of such an intention, the Governor would dissolve the Court, and the attempt would be frustrated. He therefore used all his secrecy and energy, studying the sentiments of the members. The Representatives, as if conscious of the crisis, now appeared in greater numbers than had ever before been known. The proposal for a Congress had already been made in other Colonies, but all eyes were fixed upon the Legislature of Massachusetts for the governing movements. A committee of nine² on the state of the Province had been appointed in the Assembly, and Adams, who was chairman, had probably decided on the plan of action before he left Boston. The committee, consisting of the principal members of the House, met repeatedly, but could not agree upon their report. Adams observed that some were for mild measures,³ and he soon perceived what course must be taken. Those who were with him found themselves environed with difficulties, being constantly watched by the royal officers. One of the committee was Daniel Leonard, who professed patriotism, but was known to most of the members as lukewarm in the cause. It was necessary to guard against him, and the com-

¹ Bradford's State Papers, p. 415.

² Journal of the House for 1774.

³ Gordon, I. 365.

mittee, by entertaining at their meetings nothing but vague propositions for conciliation, allowed Leonard to deceive himself and the Governor—with whom he secretly communicated—into the belief that concession would be recommended by the Legislature, and compensation to the East India Company advocated. So perfectly was the project kept from Leonard, that he returned to Taunton on legal business.¹ The committee continuing its meetings, Adams conferred with his friend James Warren, directing him to keep them in play while he called a caucus of his colleagues at some specified place, where Warren was to meet him that evening. His object was to bring about the appointment of delegates to a Congress, independent of the committee, by first disclosing his plan to a few trusty members of the Assembly, and, having persuaded them, then adding more and more. On the first evening he secured a meeting of five, and, repeating his exertions, had a larger number the next night, and on the third more than thirty. These proceedings were conducted with the utmost secrecy, the popular leaders taking the sense of the members in a private way, until they found they had a majority of the House, and were prepared for the consummation of the plan.²

In the mean time, Joseph Warren, who assumed the lead in Boston during the absence of Samuel Adams, was exerting all his influence to retard the efforts of a large number who were industriously advocating an indemnity to the East India Company. To his friend he wrote:—

“This afternoon was a meeting of a considerable number of tradesmen of this town, but, after some altercations, they dissolved themselves without coming to any resolutions; for which I am very sorry, as we had some expectations from the meeting. We are industrious to save our country, but not more than others to destroy

¹ Bancroft, VII. 62, 63. Compare General Gage's letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, Salem, June 26, 1774.

² Gordon, I. 365.

it. The party who are for paying for the tea, and, by that, for making way for every compliance, are too formidable. However, we have endeavored to convince our friends of the impolicy of giving way in a single article, as the party will certainly gain strength for a total submission, by our having sacrificed such a sum as they demand for the payment of the tea. I think your attendance can by no means be dispensed with over Friday, as I believe we shall have a warm engagement."¹

But, as we have seen, a higher duty kept Adams at Salem. His plans being matured, and all the details arranged, even to the drafting of the resolutions, Friday, the 17th, was fixed upon as the time for accomplishing them. On that day, when one hundred and twenty-nine members were present,² Adams, at the head of the committee of nine, produced his resolutions, first taking the precaution to have the door locked, as at the closing of Hutchinson's last session in March; and to have the door-keeper ordered to let no person in nor suffer any to depart.³ He then introduced the resolves, to the astonishment of those who were not in the secret.⁴ They provided for the appointment of five delegates consisting of James Bowdoin, Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Robert Treat Paine, any three of whom should be a quorum, to meet such committees or delegates from the other Colonies as had been, or might be, appointed, either by their respective Houses of Burgesses or Representatives, or by convention, or by Committees of Correspondence, appointed by the respective Houses of Assembly, on the 1st of September, at Philadelphia, or any other place that should be judged most suitable by the joint committees.⁵ Such was the apprehension of some members, that they were desirous to waive the subject; but the order forbidding the departure of any member prevented their quitting the hall. It is probable that attempts were made to

¹ J. Warren to S. Adams, June 15, 1774.

² Bancroft, VII. 64.

³ Sketch of S. Adams in Sanderson's Biography of the Signers, IX. 308.

⁴ Judge Sullivan's Biographic Sketch, October, 1803.

⁵ Journal of the House for 1774.

pass, for the door-keeper wavered, and was uneasy at the responsibility resting upon him. To relieve him of the charge, Samuel Adams took the key into his own keeping.¹ But before the question was put to vote, an administration member made a plea of illness, and was allowed to leave the House. He hastened to inform the Governor of what was happening, and Gage as quickly sent Thomas Flucker, his Secretary, to dissolve the Assembly. That official found the door locked, the key being in Mr. Adams's pocket, and was unable to obtain admission.² He then directed the messenger to enter and tell the Speaker that the Secretary had a communication from his Excellency, and desired he might be admitted to read it. The messenger presently returned and reported that he had so informed the Speaker, who had mentioned it to the House, and their orders were to keep the door fast. The news of this state of affairs had now got abroad, and a great crowd, attracted by the extraordinary nature of the scene, had collected about the doorway and upon the stairs leading to the Representatives' Chamber. To these, for the want of a more responsible audience, the Secretary read the order, several members of the House,³ who, it appears, had not been present at the proceedings, being among the listeners. He then retired and repeated the paper to the Council. That his Excellency had lost no time in preparing his proclamation is evident from its singular brevity, the whole, from the "whereas" to "God save the King," occupying but eleven lines.⁴

Ignoring the existence of the Secretary and his performance outside, the Assembly pursued their plan without faltering. The delegates were elected, only twelve voices dissenting; and as no funds to meet the necessary expenses could be legally obtained from the treasury without the

¹ Sketch in Sanderson's Signers, IX. 308.

² Compare Gordon, Bancroft, and Barry.

³ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 422. Journal of the House for 1774.

⁴ Bradford's State Papers, p. 416.

Governor's acquiescence, every town in the Province was assessed in proportion to the last tax-list, and the sum of five hundred pounds was thus provided. Resolutions were then adopted for the relief of Charlestown and Boston, as suffering under the hand of power in support of the liberties of all America; renouncing the use of tea, discontinuing the consumption of all goods and manufactures imported from Great Britain, and giving all possible encouragement to home productions. These resolutions and the vote for delegates, together with a carefully prepared list of the amount of money to be raised in each town, were sent forth in a printed circular, signed by Samuel Adams, and directed to the Selectmen.¹ Having completed their object, and having no further business to transact, they obeyed the mandate for dissolution. On the same day, Cushing, as Speaker of the House, sent to the sister Colonies the official notification of these proceedings, not doubting that they would be agreed to, and desiring, if they should, that notice of the ratification might be sent to him as soon as possible. That to the Assembly of Pennsylvania reached the hands of their Committee of Correspondence, who, on the 19th of July, presented it to the House.

These proceedings, so important as giving the Revolution a national character, were led to success by the master-spirit of New England, Samuel Adams. His vigilance and sagacity supplied him with resources for every situation, and his counsels were followed with absolute confidence. Every move was systematically progressive. Each measure evinced such wisdom that in no one instance was it necessary to recede. Everything was founded upon the principle of justice and planned with a perfect knowledge of the popular character

John Adams for several years had studiously held aloof

¹ Printed circular to the Selectmen of the Towns of Massachusetts. The resolutions adopted on this occasion were brought to the House by Mr. Adams. The replies of the towns, with the money enclosed, were all directed to him at Boston.

from public business. In placing him upon the list of delegates, Samuel Adams doubtless saw the means of bringing the patriotism and abilities of his kinsman into prominence. He had in vain solicited him to act as orator, two years before, at the Old South, and, as he saw such legal talents idle in the public cause, he doubtless used those powers of persuasion for which he was so remarkable to conquer that aversion to political life. It is certain that Samuel Adams had arranged his plan for a Congress before the Court was removed to Salem, and it is highly probable that he was mainly instrumental in bringing John Adams to become a delegate. "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, with my country, is my unalterable determination," he said soon after to Sewall, his friend and associate at the bar. The public career of John Adams now commenced,¹ and henceforth his path was to be broader, and his career greater, until he became the executive head of a free and independent nation.

At the very moment when the Assembly were appointing delegates to a Continental Congress, a town meeting had convened at Boston. It was for this occasion that Joseph Warren had written to Samuel Adams to be present if possible, as they expected a "warm engagement." John Adams was made moderator in his absence. The subject for discussion was the scheme of indemnifying the East India Company for the loss of their tea, a point which had been ardently pressed by many influential persons, and was suggested by respectable people in the other Colonies. Franklin had advised it, and numerous wealthy tradesmen and others in the administration party had offered to contribute their proportion. Dr. Warren, in his letter to Samuel Adams,

¹ Bancroft, VII. 8, 65. Compare Frothingham's *Siege of Boston*, where it is stated (p. 21) that Samuel Adams was now "commencing his career," and John Adams "continuing a brilliant service." This error, occurring in a work widely and deservedly quoted for its general accuracy, is noticed as indicating how little has hitherto been understood of the public services of Samuel Adams.

deplored the number of those who were willing to make such a compliance, and it is clear that the leaders in Boston looked forward to the occasion with no little interest. But the patriotism of the masses was superior to all other considerations; and when the friends of such a plan were invited freely to speak their minds before the assemblage, not one was found to advocate the measure.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Adams Chairman of the Donation Committee. — Its Beneficent Objects. — The Tories endeavor to annihilate the Committee of Correspondence. — Adams its Champion in Faneuil Hall. — His Activity, Cheerfulness, and Courage. — The "Solemn League and Covenant." — Gage issues a Proclamation against it. — Adams defends the Non-importation Scheme. — Conspiracies to arrest Adams and other Patriots. — Warnings from his Friends. — The Government attempts to corrupt him by Bribery.

At the town meeting of the 30th of May, a committee, consisting of Rowe, Boylston, Phillips, Warren, Quincy, Molineux, John Adams, Inches, and Appleton, with Samuel Adams as chairman, had been appointed to report upon some plan for the relief of those who would probably be the first sufferers by the enforcement of the Port Act. It would appear that letters soliciting relief from abroad had already been sent; for at this meeting it was voted, that all donations to the poor of the town should be delivered to the Overseers of the Poor for distribution by them in concert with the above named committee.¹ The responses to these appeals began to appear towards the close of June, and generous stores of provisions thenceforth continued to pour in to the relief of Boston. The contributions showed how perfectly united was the whole Province; for scarcely a considerable town but sent its quota, while from the other Colonies came continual gifts of sheep and oxen, potatoes, corn, pork, bread, and flour. A donation committee was appointed later in the summer to distribute these supplies "according to their best discretion."² This committee numbered twenty-six, and included some of the principal and

¹ Town Records for June, 1774.

² The correspondence between this committee and the contributors of donations is published in the Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections, Fourth Series, IV. 1 — 278.

wealthiest men of Boston. Samuel Adams, as chairman, generally governed its proceedings, presided at its meetings, and penned much of its correspondence. During his absence at the Congress in Philadelphia, in August, September, and October of this year, he continued his exertions to procure contributions from the other Colonies, and, on his return, resumed by common assent his position at the head of the committee. King George had indeed sowed dragon's teeth when he attempted to starve the Bostonians into submission.

The Tories, having failed in their efforts for the indemnification of the East India Company, determined to strike at the root of their difficulties, and now planned no less an enterprise than the annihilation of the Committee of Correspondence. Warren's "Solemn League and Covenant" had already been extensively circulated, and they resolved to make this a basis of operations. For this purpose, a petition having been presented to the Selectmen for a town meeting, signed by the requisite number of citizens, the people assembled on the 27th, in great numbers, at Faneuil Hall, willing to listen patiently to the arguments of their enemies. It is not probable, however, that the real intention was suspected. The gathering quickly swelled beyond the capacity of the hall; for now that thousands were thrown out of employment, every public meeting was more than ever thronged; and the Tories shrewdly argued that, with starvation staring the inhabitants in the face, they would be likely to vote for the apparently slight concession of paying for the tea, which would eventually throw open the harbor and restore trade. After Samuel Adams had been selected to preside, the meeting adjourned to the Old South, where the accommodations were more ample. When quiet was restored in the vast assemblage, on motion, the "Solemn League and Covenant" and a number of letters were read to the meeting, whereupon one of the Loyalists proposed "that a vote of censure be passed by the town upon the conduct of the Committee of Correspondence, and that the said Committee be annihilated."

Adams immediately arose at the moderator's desk, and desired that, if the conduct of that body was to be considered, another person might be appointed to the chair; and "during that debate," Thomas Cushing acted as moderator. Adams was the father and life of the Committee, and to him it fell appropriately to defend it when attacked. He descended to the floor of the church, and there the subject was discussed, "the gentlemen in favor of the motion being patiently heard; but it being dark, and these declaring that they had nothing further to offer, it was voted to defer the consideration thereof to the adjournment."¹ The debate recommenced at ten o'clock the next forenoon. The theme was particularly calculated to nerve Adams to the use of all his powers. The arguments brought forward by the Loyalists for the occasion, the appeals to the crowds of laboring men and mechanics to ward off the misery which was slowly enveloping their families, were such as needed to be answered in kind. It must ever be regretted that no full report was made of the harangues and speeches of this exciting epoch; but the newspapers of the day contain only the briefest allusions to them. What Samuel Adams advanced was addressed to the understanding rather than the passions of his auditors. His was a style of oratory which, though it rose with the occasion and was peculiarly impressive, was never ornate or grandiloquent. Thoroughly master of his subject, and carrying conviction by the earnestness of his manner as well as the soundness of his views, he was listened to with profound attention. His style of public address has been sometimes compared to that of Franklin. He often illustrated his subject with anecdotes. The *Analectic Magazine*, early in the present century, published an instance of

¹ Bancroft says: "The patriot Samuel Adams, finding himself not only proscribed by the King, but on trial in a Boston town meeting, left the chair and took his place on the floor. His enemies summoned the hardihood to engage with him in debate, in which they were allowed the utmost freedom."—*History*, VII. 68, 69.

this, which has been associated with the occasion now under consideration.

"A meeting was called in Boston, in consequence of some new inroads upon the rights and liberties of the people. Adams, who sat silent, listening to all their violent harangues, at last rose, and, after a few remarks, concluded with saying: 'A Grecian philosopher, who was lying asleep upon the grass, was aroused by the bite of some animal upon the palm of his hand. He closed his hand suddenly as he awoke, and found that he had caught a field-mouse. As he was examining the little animal who dared to attack him, it unexpectedly bit him a second time; he dropped it, and it made its escape. Now, fellow-citizens, what think you was the reflection he made upon this trifling circumstance? It was this: that there is no animal, however weak and contemptible, which cannot defend its own liberty, if it will only *fight* for it.'

"The cause of American Independence," continues the writer of the anecdote, who was a contemporary and admirer of Adams, "owed much to the zeal and intrepidity of this individual.' In comparison with politicians of expediency and intrigue, his love of liberty, his sincerity, his honesty, and his consistency of character raised him into true dignity. Compared with those who have governed empires and swayed the fate of nations, but whose history is tarnished by corruption and venality, the memory of this humble patriot is enrolled among the defenders of his country, and repeated with gratitude and respect by the meanest citizen of that state which he contributed to render free."¹

It was now that he drew a picture of the future greatness of America as she must one day become under the influx of population from Europe and by her vast natural resources; and he pointed out a great empire of the West for the residence of millions yet unborn, the posterity of those whose happiness it was to prepare the way by their virtue and courage for the generations who were to follow.

"An empire is rising in America," said he. "Britain, by her multiplied oppressions, is accelerating that independency which she

¹ Percy Anecdotes, Vol. II. Analectic Magazine, February, 1814, III. 235.

dreads. We have a post to maintain, to desert which would entail upon us the curses of posterity. The virtue of our ancestors inspires us. For my part, I have been wont to converse with Poverty; and however disagreeable a companion she may be thought to be by the affluent and luxurious, who never were acquainted with her, I can live happily with her the remainder of my days, if I can thereby contribute to the redemption of my country. Our oppressors cannot force us into submission by reducing us to a state of starvation. We can subsist independently of all the world. The real wants and necessities of man are few. Nature has bountifully supplied us with the means of subsistence; and if all others fail, we can, like our ancestors, subsist on the clams and muscles which abound on our shore.”¹

Such is the outline of a speech of some duration, as remembered some years afterwards by one who was present at this or a similar meeting, about the time of the Port Act; and, lacking the precise date, it may with propriety be introduced on the present occasion. “Samuel Adams,” said a distinguished divine, “was one of Plutarch’s men. Modern times have produced no character like his that I can call to mind.” The remark is merited. Utterly ignoring himself, and devoid of affectation or display, he lived with but one soul-inspiring thought,—the welfare and happiness of his fellow-countrymen. Their endurance and virtue he knew must lead on to the independence of his country. Towards that single purpose he bent his wonderful energies, and, seeming to personify the spirit of freedom, he kept his gaze rivetted upon the great prize to which every event was lessening the distance. As Adams had resigned the moderator’s chair for the express purpose of entering the lists in defence of the committee, he must have spoken long and earnestly on the subject. The town record states that the debate on this second day was of long continuance, but finally the question was put as to annihilating the Com-

¹ Compare letter of Adams to James Warren, in which this same sentiment is expressed (*ante*, pp. 163, 164). See also Bancroft, VII. 59, 60.

mittee, when a great majority voted in the negative; and then almost the entire meeting responded ay to the following motion:—

“That the town bear open testimony that they are abundantly satisfied of the upright intentions, and much approve of the honest zeal of the Committee of Correspondence, and desire that they will persevere with their usual activity and firmness, continuing steadfast in the way of well doing.”¹

It cannot be supposed that Adams and his friends were much in doubt as to the issue of this trial of strength between the Loyalists and the Patriots; but the occasion was one of more than ordinary interest, as being the final attempt of the administration party to carry their measures by legal means in Boston. That party never again essayed to sound the opinions of the people as to the iron rule of England, and thenceforth fell hopelessly back upon military power. It is easy to believe that they rallied all their forces with the expectation of carrying the day; and that Governor Gage had some influence in the affair may be inferred from the particular mention he made of this failure soon after, in a letter to the Earl of Dartmouth. The fact shows how powerful a loyal interest yet existed, whose machinations were constantly to be guarded against by the patriot leaders. Gage says, “The design of the better sort of people” was “to make a push to pay for the tea and annihilate the Committee of Correspondence; but they were outvoted by a great majority of the lower class,” and he forwarded the protest of the minority. This meeting, which seems to have completely disheartened the Tories, had a cheering effect among the friends of liberty abroad as well as among the people of Boston.

“The attempt,” said a writer in Rhode Island, a few weeks afterwards, “made by these men to annihilate your Committee of Correspondence was very natural. The robber does not wish to see

¹ Town Records for June, 1774.

our property entirely secured. An enemy about to invade a foreign country does not wish to see the coast well guarded and the country universally alarmed. Upon the same principles these men wish the dissolution of the Committee. They know that a design was formed to rob the Americans of their property; they hoped to share largely in the general plunder; but they now see that, by the vigilance, wisdom, and fidelity of the several Committees of Correspondence, the people are universally apprised of their danger, and will soon enter into such measures for the common security as will infallibly blast all their unjust expectations; and this is the true source of all the abuse thrown upon your Committee. But oh, ye worthy few! continue to treat all their attempts with the neglect which they deserve. Thus the generous mastiff looks down with pity and contempt upon the little, noisy, impertinent cur which barks at him as he walks the streets. Your faithful services have endeared you to the wise and good in every Colony. Continue your indefatigable labors in the common cause, and you will soon see the happy success of them in the salvation of your country.”¹

Adams himself soon after refers to his antagonists in Faneuil Hall, and their abettors, as men —

“Who, on all occasions, have taken the side of our oppressors; some of whom have entered into agreements for the salvation of our rights, and in the most shameful manner violated them, declaring openly their disregard for their country, posterity, or anything besides their own private property; — these, with the goodly number of conscientious votaries of the damnable doctrine of *passive obedience and non-resistance*, not in the mild sense of the honest Quaker who will injure no side, but in the rigid sense of the flaming Jacobite who would resist to the last extremity every one who would even open his mouth in favor of the rights of mankind, or affirm that James the Second was rightfully expelled from the throne of Great Britain.”²

At this meeting, the town's Committee of Ways and Means for employing the Poor (of which Samuel Adams was

¹ Address “to the worthy inhabitants of the town of Boston,” Rhode Island, July 21, 1774 (Force's American Archives, I. 626 – 628).

² “Candidus,” in the Massachusetts Spy, July 7, 1774.

chairman) reported that they had received very encouraging accounts of the readiness of their sister Colonies to aid in the relief of the distressed Bostonians in this their extremity, and the zeal and wisdom with which they acted was soon apparent. The "Solemn League and Covenant" was adopted in conformity with the late resolutions of the Assembly, and shows the perfect harmony of action existing between that body and all minor assemblages in the Province. The agreement was not confined to the towns of Massachusetts, for which it seemed originally designed, It reached the other Colonies, where it was generally subscribed. One military commander having openly declared that he would commit the man to gaol who should presume to sign it, upwards of a hundred persons immediately affixed their signatures. "A wise man," says the writer of the fact, "might easily have foreseen that this would have been the consequence of such an imprudent threat."¹ In Portsmouth, New Hampshire, many who professed to be of the popular party were strongly opposed to the League as injuring the prosperity of the Province and directing the trade into other channels. Gage issued a proclamation pointing out to the people "the high criminality and dangerous consequence to themselves of such alarming and unprecedented combinations"; and he enjoined all magistrates and officers to apprehend and secure for trial such as should presume to publish, or offer to others to be signed, or should themselves sign, the covenant; and the respective sheriffs of the Province were required to cause the proclamation to be posted up in some public place in each town.² The Loyalist writers, too, assailed the project in Draper's Gazette, and, with plausible sophistry, dissuaded the people from supporting it. This brought out Samuel Adams in its defence in the public press; and, on the day of the meeting at the Old South, he addressed the people of Boston as follows:—

"It is very evident a scheme has been concerted by some per-

¹ Boston Gazette, July 4, 1774.

² *Ibid.*

sons to frustrate any attempts that might be made to suspend our trade with Great Britain, till our most intolerable grievances are redressed. The scheme appears to be, to seem to agree to the suspension, in case all agreed, and then, by construing some passage in a letter from the Committee of another Province, that they had not agreed, to declare that the conditional signers were not holden. A game or two of such mercantile policy would soon have convinced the world that Lord North had a just idea of the Colonies, and that, notwithstanding their real power to prove a rope of hemp to him, they were a rope of sand in reality among themselves.

“I would beg leave to ask the voluminous querists referred to, whether they conceive a non-consumption agreement would ever have been thought of in the country, could our brethren there have persuaded themselves that the merchants were in earnest to suspend trade the little time there was between our receiving the Port Bill and the appointment of a Congress, or any other general measure come into from which a radical trade might be expected? 2. Whether the trade, in their last meeting, declaring that their conditional agreement was dissolved, on pretence that advices from New York and Philadelphia were totally discouraging, was not highly unbecoming a people whose peculiar circumstances rendered it their duty to stop their trade to Great Britain the moment the Port Bill reached the shore of America? 3. Whether they conceived the Committee of Boston planned the non-consumption agreement, and sent it first into the country for their adoption? or rather, whether the country, enraged at their preposterous management, did not originate the plan, and press the Committee to have it digested, printed, and recommended throughout the Colony? 4. I would inquire whether a backwardness in the Province, actually suffering, to come into the only peaceful measure that remains for our extrication from slavery would not naturally excuse every other Province from taking one step for the common salvation? 5. Whether, in that case, all the trade of the Province, whether consisting of spring, summer, or fall importations, would, in the end, be worth an oyster-shell? 6. Whether all the bugbears started against the Worcester covenant, as holding up the taking a solemn oath to ‘withdraw all commercial connections,’ which our honest commentators tell the people means even to deny buying or selling greens or potatoes to them, does not betray a great want of

that candor and manly generosity which is expected from well-bred and reasonable citizens? 7. Whether the suggestion that the Boston merchants ceasing to import will throw the trade into the hands of importers in other Provinces is not utterly unbecoming an inhabitant of that town into which the beneficence of the whole continent is ready to flow in the most exemplary manner?

“For shame! self-interested mortals. Cease to draw upon your worthy fellow-citizens the just resentment of millions. If there may be some punctilious wrong in the non-consumption agreement, the united wisdom of the continent will surely be capable of setting matters right at the general Congress; and no gentleman trader, be his haste ever so great to get rich, need distress himself so mightily about the profits of one fall importation, if the constant clamor of the trade for two years past, that they did business for nothing, had any foundation.”¹

General Gage had discretionary orders for the seizure of the “ringleaders” among the patriots; but, with the irresolution of a weak mind, he vacillated between the desire to make a bold stroke and his fear of the determined character of the people. Samuel Adams, Thomas Cushing, and John Hancock were the most obnoxious, and of this trio Adams was looked upon as “the Chief of the Revolution.”² It is certain that the friends of Adams were continually apprehensive of an attempt to seize him secretly and ship him to England for trial. Openly the scheme could not be consummated without an immediate outbreak; and, had he been arrested, it is probable that thousands from the country would have joined Boston for his rescue. Massachusetts at that time was the most populous Province in America, and contained three hundred and fifty two thousand inhabitants, — or fourteen thousand more than the Province of New York, — while the people of Boston numbered seventeen thousand. Though four regiments had arrived and encamped on the Common, their entire force could not have availed against the combined power of the yeomanry, had

¹ “Candidus,” in the Boston Gazette, June 27, 1774.

² Bancroft, VI. 523. Barry’s Massachusetts, II. 480.

affairs been hurried to a crisis. Adams and his friends were therefore safe, while Gage hesitated to assume a responsibility which would be tremendous in its consequences. But at any time the blow might fall unexpectedly, and so strong were the apprehensions that he would be seized and sent secretly to England, that it was feared he might be taken from his bed ; and his friends about this time insisted upon his placing additional security at night upon the doors and windows of his house. On the 5th day of July the Committee of Correspondence, at its regular meeting, had this subject under discussion, as the following brief record indicates : —

“ A report having been spread that some gentlemen were to be apprehended, *Voted* unanimously, the above members¹ being all present, that we will attend to the business of the Committee of Correspondence, unless prevented by brutal force.”

The danger seems to have been generally feared among the acquaintances of Adams ; and he himself, in a letter about this time to Richard Henry Lee, refers to the subject. He says : —

“ Lord North had no expectation that we should be thus sustained. On the contrary, he trusted that Boston would be left to fall alone. He has therefore made no preparation for the effects of a union. From the information I have had from intelligent persons in England, I verily believe the design was to seize some persons and send them home ; but the steadiness and prudence of the people, and the unexpected union of the Colonies, evidenced by liberal contributions for our support, has disconcerted them, and they are at a loss to know how to proceed further.”²

His friend, James Warren, who looked upon him as the great champion of freedom in America, wrote to him from Plymouth : —

¹ Samuel Adams, Joseph Warren, William Molineux, William Greenleaf, Benjamin Church, Thomas Young, William Powell, Richard Boynton, Nathaniel Barber, Joseph Greenleaf, John Sweetser.

² S. Adams to R. H. Lee, July, 1774 (Life of Lee, I. 99 — 101).

“ ‘Beware of the Ides of March,’ was a caution given to Cæsar, and his neglect of it was afterwards regretted by his friends. His rid the world of a tyrant; and yours may deprive your country of the wisdom and virtue of a distinguished patriot.”¹

Arthur Lee writes from London : —

“ The Ministry seem to have lost all hope of seeing you and Mr. Hancock here, or they would have struggled more for their sheriff this year.”²

From Northampton the ever-watchful Hawley wrote : —

“ Pray, sir, let Mr. Samuel Adams know that our top Tories here give out most confidently that he will certainly be taken up before the Congress. I am not timid with regard to myself or friends, but I am satisfied that they have such advice from head-quarters. Please give my hearty regards to him, the Speaker, and all the gentlemen of the Congress.”³

But with the knowledge that the King’s order for his arrest might at any time be executed, his firmness never forsook him. Samuel Adams was a stranger to the sentiment of fear; and had he been called to the dreadful sacrifice, he would cheerfully have mounted the scaffold, supported by the conscious justice of the cause in which he suffered, and serene in the belief that his fate would but hasten the advent of American Independence.

Plans of seizure were not the only means that were suggested for relieving the government from his powerful opposition. Knowing his poverty, it was determined in England to tempt him with bribes, as if, like the statesmen of that country, where places of emolument were bartered like other property, Adams too must have his price. During the administration of Governor Hutchinson, it was commonly reported that attempts had been made upon his integrity; and when some members of the English Ministry or their friends

¹ James Warren to Samuel Adams, July 1, 1774.

² Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, July 8, 1774.

³ Joseph Hawley to John Adams, July 25, 1774 (*John Adams’s Works*, IX. 342–346).

wrote to that official, "*Why hath not Mr. Adams been taken off from his opposition by an office?*" the Governor replied, "*Such is the obstinacy and inflexible disposition of the man, that he never would be conciliated by any office or gift whatever.*"¹

Gage was perhaps privately instructed in England to make the attempt, if an opportunity should offer. The occasion seemed to present itself after the dissolution of the Assembly in June of this year, for thenceforth Adams was deprived of his stipend as its Clerk; and this, added to the distress which the closing of the harbor had entailed upon the town, left him with scarcely the means of feeding his little family.

"By Colonel Fenton, who commanded one of the newly arrived regiments, the Governor sent a confidential and verbal message. The officer, after the customary salutations, stated the object of his visit. He said that an adjustment of the existing disputes was very desirable, as well as important to the interests of both. That he was authorized by Governor Gage to assure him that he had been empowered to confer upon him such benefits as would be satisfactory, upon the condition that he would engage to cease in his opposition to the measures of government, and that it was the advice of Governor Gage to him not to incur the further displeasure of his Majesty; that his conduct had been such as made him liable to the penalties of an act of Henry the Eighth, by which persons could be sent to England for trial, and, by changing his course, he would not only receive great personal advantages, but would thereby make his peace with the King. Adams listened with apparent interest to this recital, until the messenger had concluded. Then rising, he replied, glowing with indignation: 'Sir, I trust I have long since made my peace with the King of kings. No personal consideration shall induce me to abandon the righteous cause of my country. Tell Governor Gage it is the advice of Samuel Adams to him no longer to insult the feelings of an exasperated people.'²

¹ Thacher's Funeral Discourse, p. 19. The facts were supplied by the venerable Samuel Dexter, a friend and intimate associate of Samuel Adams.

² Narration by Mrs. Hannah Wells in 1818.

The contemporary historian, Gordon, writing from his own personal knowledge, says : —

“When in the chair of the first magistrate, his [Hutchinson’s] appointments to different offices were generally of men well qualified for discharging the duties of the same, though mostly supporters of the government. He was advised by a British naval officer to secure Messrs. Hancock and S. Adams, by promoting them; but replied that though such a scheme might answer in regard to Mr. H., it would not as to Mr. A., for it would be only giving him more power to aid him in his opposition, and that he should not be able afterward to remove him. Under the charter, the Governor cannot remove from offices without the consent of the Council; and Mr. Hutchinson knew that Mr. S. Adams’s interest in the Council would be greater than his own.”¹

The honesty of Adams was above the arts of his tempters. There are numerous evidences of his having been approached, but always with the same result. A writer in 1796 records as the verbal statement of Joseph Warren, made to him before the Revolution, that Samuel Adams, “despising British gold,” had bravely withstood the temptations of his country’s enemies.² Another of his contemporaries refers to a pre-Revolutionary period, when Adams “had it in his power to have secured to himself the most liberal bounties of the British crown.”³ Adams himself, writing over an assumed name, alludes, in one of his political essays, to “the *mean, underhand methods*” — purposely italicising the words — by which the government had attempted to prevent his exposing the frauds of the Commissioners of the Customs.⁴ Hutchinson, in a private letter to the Ministry, deploras the fact that Adams “could not be made dependent and taken off by some appointment to a civil office.”⁵ Early in the pres-

¹ Gordon, I. 357. This conforms with Hutchinson’s letter to Lord Dartmouth, Oct. 9, 1773.

² Independent Chronicle, Boston, July 24, 1796.

³ Independent Chronicle, Dec. 11, 1788.

⁴ “Candidus,” in the Boston Evening Post, Dec. 26, 1768.

⁵ Hutchinson to the Earl of Dartmouth, Oct. 9, 1773.

ent century, one who had personally known Samuel Adams recorded his recollection of a conversation about the year 1792, when Adams was Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, in which this topic was touched upon. The writer refers to a large sum that was offered by the British government. The venerable Adams ended the subject by remarking that "a guinea had never glistened in his eyes."¹ A gentleman, who in 1826 "still remembered the sound of his voice in" the Old State-House," says of him, "so sensible were the military and ministerial agents of his superior influence, that it is well known their offers were almost boundless to induce him to go over to their party, or if not, to remain tranquil."² Another, who writes as though the facts were personally known to him, speaks of Adams as one who "chose the high honor and exalted feeling of supporting the liberties and equal rights of his countrymen, with a moderate fortune, to the low and grovelling *dignity* of a '*British pensioner of two thousand guineas per annum for life*' ;"³ and this seems to tally with the remark of the executor of Samuel Adams's estate, who repeatedly asserted that he had seen and examined, before the papers passed out of his hands, evidence to prove that the British government had offered the patriot one thousand pounds sterling per annum for two lives, — his own and his son's. The collection was long the common prey of autograph hunters, and in the course of years the most interesting of them disappeared, — this among others. Thacher, in his funeral sermon, quotes the written statement of some contemporary, that, upon the dissolution of the Legislature in 1774, Adams was reported to have been offered a lucrative place under government, if he would abandon the cause, but that, though by this dissolution, he was deprived of his principal means of support, "he reprobated the offer, choosing rather to subsist by individual or common beneficence, or even perish,

¹ Independent Chronicle.

² Boston Patriot, July 26, 1826.

³ Niles's Principles and Acts, p. 477.

than to sacrifice the cause of truth and betray the liberty of his country." The fact has descended in family tradition that he was thrice tempted by British emissaries, and it has even been said that he was offered a patent of nobility among other inducements, though of this there is no other proof than the assertion of a contemporary and friend of Adams, who remembered a rumor which was once current to that effect. It is certain that his name was included in the list of those whom the Ministry, and perhaps the King, proposed to propitiate by creating them American peers, as a step towards conciliation during the war.¹ Separating vague statements from what is reliable, there is no doubt that the humble circumstances of Adams induced the Administration to attempt his integrity; but they had yet to learn the incorruptible virtue of the American patriots during the Revolution, and that where armed force could not intimidate, bribery was equally powerless to effect their purposes.

Although the Loyalists had been defeated at the Old South in their effort to call down public censure upon the Committee of Correspondence, many of their principal merchants signed a protest against the Covenant, which had been scattered far and wide, together with a circular letter from the Committee. The dissentients at the previous meeting were the chief movers in this affair. They denounced the agreement as of "a most dangerous nature and tendency," and appealed to the cupidity of the tradespeople to use their influence against it,² and the action of the Committee was virulently assailed. Samuel Adams again vindicated the Committee in a detailed account of the origin and progress of the non-importation plan, and appealed to the people with all his powers of persuasion to stand to the agreement until the government was forced to redress their grievances. Referring to the opposition of the protesting merchants, he says:—

¹ John Adams's Works, III. 178.

² Boston Evening Post, July 4, 1774.

“They observed that, by lengthening out the time for the reception of goods, enormous quantities might be ordered, which, instead of ‘delegating’ the manufacturers to represent us, as the Philadelphian wisely expresses it, would render them quite easy until the ensuing election is over; and then farewell Liberty in every part of Christendom. This is a concern of too much importance to be risked against a few trifling accommodations and adjustments of punctilios. The good sense of Newburyport and Providence, with many other towns, perceived the necessity of drawing up the shipping to the wharves, and not exporting nor importing a farthing’s worth to or from Great Britain. Would to God the merchants, who had a non-importation forced upon them whether they would or not, had been as spirited and consistent with their acknowledged duty! How abject must the men appear in the eyes of mankind whom no species of oppression can divert from the pursuit of so small a gain as might be made by picking gold off gingerbread! Would not a man of true wisdom and spirit sacrifice his all, and risk his very life, rather than run the venture of having his person and property subjected to the absolute disposal of a British minister? And if laws may be obtained by that minister to control the one and command the other in all cases whatever, who can say that he is a freeman or that he really owns a farthing? Putting off the time we should oppose such a violent attack upon us discovers too much a disposition to submit to it. And, certainly, a plain counteracting the party who are in pursuit of the acknowledged sole measure to be depended on for relief, without even proposing any substitute in its stead, is declaring to the world that, in the esteem of such opponents, LIFE, LIBERTY, and PROPERTY are not worth contending for. To defer all to the decision of the approaching Congress is, in my opinion, extremely impolitic. A relaxation in some articles of absolute necessity, and some modifications of the general agreement, must be inevitably left to their wisdom; but certainly the more the resolution of every part of the continent is manifested to maintain their sacred rights at all hazards and extremities, the more strong will be the hands of their delegates.”¹

¹ “Candidus,” in the *Massachusetts Spy*, July 7, 1774.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Fortitude and Forbearance of Boston under the Port Act. — The Committee of Safety. — Distressed Condition of the People. — Adams plans Measures to be pursued in Massachusetts during his Absence in Congress. — He proposes to Dr. Warren the Suffolk County Convention. — Preparations for Departure. — An Outfit from Unknown Friends. — Fashionable Dress in the Last Century. — The Massachusetts Delegation set out from Boston. — Hospitalities and Public Honors paid them on their Journey. — Arrival at Philadelphia. — Extraordinary Assemblage of Great Characters. — Preliminary Meeting of the Delegates.

DURING the month of July, the Donation Committee were in active operation. Supplies for the poor found their way to the town from far and near by land, for nothing was permitted to pass even from wharf to wharf in a boat. Conscientious that their cause was that of all America, and that the eyes of their countrymen and of the world were turned upon them, they bore oppression with Spartan fortitude, and patiently awaited the time for active measures. The spirit to declare themselves independent of England could have been aroused at any time by the leaders, but prudence restrained them until the wisdom of all the Colonies could be concentrated in Congress. There was more courage in the calm forbearance of that devoted town than in any passionate or deliberate outbreak. Perhaps the posting of troops in Boston was with the hope that the inhabitants could be provoked to some act which might be construed into an excuse for firing upon them. But the sturdy townspeople had been too long and systematically engaged in the defence of their liberties to be hurried into a conflict. They were prepared for the event, but wisely reposed upon the justice of their cause while a shadow of hope remained that reason would resume her sway in the minds of British statesmen. Besides, any armed contest, the responsibility

of which could be made to rest with the public, would injure the cause in the Middle and Southern Provinces, who might charge the Bostonians with rashly precipitating a war which could have been averted by the deliberations of the approaching Congress. Perhaps no other people in the world, under similar circumstances, could have remained under such perfect self-restraint. With every circumstance to exasperate them into madness, they quietly watched the progress of events, and awaited only the hour when liberty and manhood called for action.

At the meeting which appointed the Donation Committee at Faneuil Hall, Samuel Adams being moderator, a Committee of Safety were chosen by ballot, for the purpose of "considering proper measures to be adopted for the common safety, during those exigencies of our public affairs which may reasonably be expected from the acts of the British Parliament altering the course of justice and annihilating our free Constitution." This committee consisted of Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, John Hancock, William Phillips, Joseph Warren, and Josiah Quincy.¹ Their duties, as announced in a printed notification, one of which Gage enclosed in a letter to the Earl of Dartmouth from Salem, were unlike those of the Committee of Safety which was appointed by the Provincial Congress in the following October. They were apparently to act as a board of directors to the general Donation Committee. Their particular attention was given to such business as should "afford employment to the poor in the paving and repairing of streets, building of wharves on the town's land, the building houses and vessels or other public work to be carried on by moneys arising from voluntary donations, the selling of real estate belonging to the town, and to consider what further measures were proper to be taken upon the exigency of public affairs, more especially relative to the Port Act, and to act upon such other matters as might properly come before

¹ Town Records for July 26, 1774.

them.”¹ No accounts exist of the proceedings of this body. Two of their number left Boston for the Congress at Philadelphia during the next month, and, as the preliminary steps for the Provincial Congress were taken towards the close of that month, it is likely that their duties soon became merged into those of that celebrated convention. A week before this meeting took place, another committee was appointed, with Samuel Adams as its chairman, to “consider and report a declaration to be made by this town to Great Britain and all the world.”² The records are silent as to what report, if any, was made, and as events crowded on, it was perhaps considered unnecessary to proceed with the original intention.

“This is now,” said the Gazette, “the forty-eighth day since the siege of Boston began, and notwithstanding our accumulating distresses, the inhabitants continue to exhibit that calm firmness and unanimity which astonishes our enemies. Notwithstanding a report industriously propagated, that a number of persons in the confidence of their fellow-citizens were to be apprehended and sent home for trial, or we know not what, no one of them has left his ground. If any unfair practices should hereafter take place, this Province and continent have it in their power to do themselves justice.

“The inhabitants of this town are greatly supported under the weight of ministerial vengeance by the kind sympathy and generous donations of our brethren and friends through the Province and continent. It indeed seems as if their prophecy would soon be verified in Boston’s becoming the granary of North America. May the behavior of its inhabitants continue to deserve their praise and bounty. A whole continent is now awake and active; one spirit actuates the whole, and all unite in prayers to the Supreme Disposer of events that the liberties of America may yet be preserved. Last Thursday was a solemn day in this town; the shops and streets empty, and the churches full. May the day be followed with true repentance and amendment of life, and all the ills we suffer now, like scattered clouds, shall pass away.”³

¹ Printed notification signed by William Cooper, Town Clerk.

² Town Records, July 19, 1774.

³ Boston Gazette, July 18, 1774.

This fast was observed on the 14th of July, as a supplication to Almighty God that the people might be relieved from their distresses. "It is hoped," said the Gazette, "that none will be permitted to spend their time in idle diversions, more especially in resorting to the place of resort to see the manœuvres of the soldiery, who certainly ought on that day to be left without a single spectator."¹

Gage, in his next letter to the Ministry, thus speaks of it: —

"The fast day appointed by the faction was kept in this town on the 14th instant as generally and punctually as if it had been appointed by authority. I might say the same of most other places, though it was not universal; for, in a few places, no regard was paid to it. But the League and Covenant has not succeeded as the faction expected."²

In the same letter he regrets that the Loyalist merchants had not repeated their attempt to comply with the Port Bill; but their signal failure at the Old South gave them no encouragement to continue. Gage never understood the character of the people he had been sent to control. He was a mere soldier, and lacked all the qualifications for government. Hutchinson was far his superior in intelligence and administrative talent; but the malignant, avaricious spirit of the late Governor could only beget intense hatred where the easy and affable manners of Gage gained him boon companions, though they inspired neither confidence nor fear. It was more a lack of wisdom than the feeling of resentment which induced him needlessly to insult the people of Massachusetts a few days after the fast, by exhorting all persons to avoid "hypocrisy, sedition, licentiousness, and all other immoralities."³

About this time Samuel Adams wrote to Richard Henry

¹ Boston Gazette, July 11, 1774.

² General Gage to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 20, 1774.

³ Proclamation, dated Council Chamber, Salem, July 21, 1774.

Lee, in Virginia, acknowledging the liberal contributions which had been made for the support of the poor.

"The inhabitants," said he, "still wear cheerful countenances. Far from being in the least intimidated, they are resolved to undergo the greatest hardships rather than submit in any instance to the tyrannical act.

"Four regiments are encamped on our Common, and more are expected;¹ but I hope the people will by circumspect behavior prevent their taking occasion to act. The Port Bill is followed by two other acts, — one for regulating the government of this Province, or rather totally to destroy our free Constitution, and substituting an absolute despotic one in its stead; the other, for the more *impartial* administration of justice, or, as some term it, for screening from punishment any soldier who shall murder an American for asserting his rights. A submission to these acts will doubtless be required and expected; but whether General Gage will find it an easy thing to *force* the people to submit to so great and fundamental a change of government is a question, I think, worth his consideration. Will the people of America consider these measures as an attack on the Constitution of an individual Province, in which the rest are not interested, or will they view the model of government prepared for us as a system for the whole continent? Will they, as unconcerned spectators, look on it to be designed only to lop off the exuberant branches of democracy in the Constitution of this Province, or as a part of a plan to reduce them all to slavery? These are questions, in my opinion, of great importance, which I trust will be thoroughly weighed in a general Congress. May God inspire that intended body with wisdom and fortitude, and unite and prosper their counsels.

The people of this Province are thoroughly sensible of the necessity of breaking off all commercial connection with a country whose political counsels tend only to enslave them. They however consider the body of the nation as kept in profound ignorance of the

¹ By a proclamation, signed by Gage on the 15th of July, it seems that numbers of these troops were deserting. Pardon is offered to all who had deserted previous to the 10th of July, and who should surrender themselves before the 10th of August. Failing to do so, they were to expect no mercy.

nature of the dispute between Britain and the Colonies, and taught to believe that we are a perfidious and rebellious people. It is with reluctance they come into any resolutions which must distress those who are not the objects of their resentments, but they are urged to it by motives of self-preservation; and are therefore signing an agreement in the several towns not to consume any British manufactures which shall be imported after the last of August next; and that they may not be imposed upon, they are to require an oath of those of whom they purchase goods. It is the virtue of the yeomanry we are chiefly to depend upon.”¹

These extracts exhibit the determined character of the opposition in Boston. The writer well knew the virtue of that yeomanry with whose interests the sympathies of his heart were ever interwoven; and he knew that the country, in its hour of trial, could lean confidently upon the stalwart farmers of inland Massachusetts more than upon any other class. The Loyalists were now especially active, being sustained and encouraged by Gage. The Governor had already written to the Earl of Dartmouth, announcing the arrival of all the transports with troops, and that Lord Percy and many others had reached Boston.

“Your Lordship,” he says, “is acquainted with the usurpation and tyranny established here by edicts of town meetings, enforced by mobs; by assuming the sole use and power of the press, and influencing the pulpits; by nominating and intimidating of juries, and, in some instances, threatening the judges; and this usurpation has by time acquired a firmness that, I fear, is not to be annihilated at once or by the ordinary methods. A free and impartial course of justice, whereby delinquents can be brought to punishment, I apprehend to be the chief thing wanting. The terror of mobs is over, and the press is becoming free.”²

Reconciliation with a government actuated by such a spirit as this, and thus by its agent wilfully perverting the essence of true English liberty, as exemplified in an oppressed but

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, late in July, 1774 (*Life of Lee*, I. 99 – 101).

² Gage to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 5, 1774.

still loyal people, was hopeless. The administration party stopped at nothing to accomplish their purposes. One of their means of opposition was to circulate reports that the Sons of Liberty, in order to make a show of assistance from the other towns, sent money into the country to purchase pretended free gifts, and that the Sons of Liberty themselves were "the scum of the earth, the dregs of the people, and poor to a proverb." At a later period, they openly accused the Donation Committee of dishonestly appropriating the funds entrusted to their charge. Among the many replies of this Committee which have been preserved, acknowledging donations from various sources in Massachusetts and the other Colonies, numbers were written by Mr. Adams; and his letters are found until a few days before his departure for Philadelphia, when they cease, and appear no more in the collection until his return from Congress. To one of the Committee of Farmington, Connecticut, who sent four hundred bushels of rye and Indian corn, he says:—

"You may be assured that the friends of liberty and a righteous government are firm and steady to the common cause of American rights. We are in hopes to keep our poor from murmuring, and that, by the blessing of Heaven, we shall shortly be confirmed in that freedom for which our ancestors entered the wilds of America."¹

To the Committee of Wethersfield, Connecticut, who sent a similar gift, he writes:—

"This town is suffering the stroke of ministerial vengeance, as they apprehend, for the liberties of America; and it affords them abundant satisfaction to find that they have the concurrent sentiments of their brethren in the sister Colonies in their favor, evidenced by the most liberal acts of munificence for their support. While they are thus encouraged and supported, I trust they will never be so ungrateful to their friends, as well [as] so lost to a sense of virtue, as to 'give up the glorious cause.' They have need of wisdom and fortitude to confound the devices of their enemies and to endure the

¹ S. Adams to Fisher Gay of Farmington, August 4, 1774 (Mass. Hist. Society's Collections, Fourth Series, IV. 15, 16).

hard conflict with dignity. They rejoice in the approaching general American Congress, and trust that, by the Divine direction and blessing, such measures will be taken as will 'bring about a happy issue of the present glorious struggle,' and secure the rights of America upon the permanent principles of equal liberty and truth."¹

Marblehead sent two hundred and twenty-four quintals of good eating fish, "one and three quarter casks of olive oil," and "thirty-nine pounds, five shillings, and threepence in cash." To its Committee of Donations, Adams replied :—

"It was, in all probability, the expectation of Lord North, the sister Colonies would totally disregard the fate of Boston, and that she would be left to suffer and fall alone. Their united resolution, therefore, to support her in the conflict will, it is hoped, greatly perplex him in the further prosecution of his oppressive measures, and finally reduce him to the necessity of receding from them. While we are thus aided by our brethren, you may depend upon it that we shall not disgrace the common cause of America by any submissions to the barbarous edict. Our inhabitants still wear cheerful countenances, and they *will* be supported by the beneficence of our friends, notwithstanding one of your addressers meanly insinuated to a gentleman of South Carolina, at Salem, yesterday, that they would receive no benefit from the large donation of rice received from that place. Such an intimation discovers a degree of depravity of heart which cannot easily be expressed. I have received a letter from your [Committee?] to our Committee of Correspondence, which I shall lay before them at their meeting this evening."²

Up to the time of Adams's leaving for Congress, the answers to letters were written by himself, Samuel Patridge, Nathaniel Appleton, and David Jeffries; after which,—the 9th of August,—Joseph Warren, Appleton, Benjamin Austin, and Jeffries were the principal correspondents. Jeffries, particularly, seems to have acted as scribe of the Committee, as his letters are the most numerous. These

¹ S. Adams to E. Williams of Wethersfield, July 29, 1774 (*Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20).

² S. Adams to the Committee of Correspondence of Marblehead, August 2, 1774 (*Ibid.*, pp. 30–32).

records show that the most substantial evidences of sympathy came from the two Carolinas. The donations were generally landed at Salem, or at other adjacent seaports, and carted thence to the distressed town. As the time approached for the departure of the delegates, Adams consulted with his confidential friends as to their future plans. On parting with the Committee of Correspondence, whose proceedings he had directed from the moment of its organization, he gave them advice which the members treasured up as "instructions" to be observed during his absence.¹ To his last evening in Boston he was actively engaged. As chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means for the relief and the employment of the poor, he attended daily at stated hours with the other members at Faneuil Hall.

In selecting Philadelphia for the meeting of the general Congress, the Massachusetts Assembly had doubtless been influenced by the comparatively retired position, and consequent safety from interference, as well as by the central location. A similar reason actuated Samuel Adams in relation to the Massachusetts Assembly, whose sessions he knew might at any time be arbitrarily interrupted in Boston or Salem. He therefore formed a project of calling a congress of deputies from Boston and the adjoining towns, similar to the convention of committees which had assembled in May last, to meet at some inland town in Suffolk County.² This body would form the nucleus of a more extended Provincial Congress of all the towns in Massachusetts whenever the occasion should require. He proposed the idea to Joseph Warren, to be carried into execution as soon after his departure for Philadelphia as circumstances might demand. The plan was well understood among the various Committees of Correspondence in the county, so that at the adjourned town meeting of the 9th of August, held at Faneuil Hall, Samuel Adams acting as moderator, the first steps

¹ Benjamin Church to Samuel Adams, Sept. 29, 1774.

² Bancroft, VII. 108, 109. Kent and Warren to Adams, see Chap. XXXIII.

were taken. This was the day before the departure of Adams and his colleagues for Philadelphia. Among the proceedings were a preamble and vote, showing how far the scheme had been matured. "It having been suggested as probable that some towns in the county were about applying for a meeting of deputies from the several towns in the county," the "Committee of Correspondence and the Selectmen were directed to choose five persons for the county Congress in case application should be made for that purpose."¹ The preliminary move was thus made towards the Suffolk County Congress, which assembled on the first Monday in September, at Dedham, and adopted Warren's celebrated memorial to the Continental Congress.

This was the first time that Samuel Adams is known to have left his birthplace for more than a few days, and then only on short visits to the adjacent towns. In 1774, a journey to Philadelphia from Boston was an undertaking of no ordinary importance. Paul Revere, as an express rider, might accomplish the distance there and back in ten or twelve days; but it could be no such fleet achievement for gentlemen of the age and dignity of the Massachusetts delegates. Adams would necessarily leave his family in straitened circumstances and environed with the dangers of a besieged town; but his son, Dr. Adams, remained, and troops of friends surrounded them. There was less reason for the other delegates to feel anxious. The wealth of Cushing, who had taken Bowdoin's place in the delegation, shielded his family from the contingencies of want; Paine resided at Taunton, where the perils of the war would not be likely to reach; and John Adams, seeing the approaching storm, had removed his family to Braintree. "They could not, indeed," he says, "have remained in safety in Boston."²

An instance of the popular esteem for Samuel Adams was related by his daughter. About a week before he set out for Congress, while seated at his evening meal, a knock

¹ Town Records for August, 1774.

² John Adams's Works, II. 340.

was heard at the door. It proved to be a well-known tailor, who politely asked that Mr. Adams should allow him to take his measure. The request excited some curiosity in the family, and the ladies were particularly desirous to know who had sent him, but he firmly refused to give any explanation, and finally the measure was taken, when the tailor bowed and took his leave. The family seated themselves again, and were speculating upon what this could mean, when they were attracted by another knock at the door. This time the most approved hatter in Boston introduced himself, and desired to get the size of Mr. Adams's head. He had hardly disappeared before a shoemaker came, and was followed by one or two others on similar errands, each observing a strict silence as to the persons whose orders they were obeying. A few days afterwards, a large trunk was brought to the house and placed in the front entrance, directed to Mr. Samuel Adams. It contained a complete suit of clothes, two pairs of shoes of the best style, a set of silver shoe-buckles, a set of gold knee-buckles, a set of gold sleeve-buttons, an elegant cocked hat, a gold-headed cane, a red cloak, and a number of minor articles of wearing-apparel. The cane and sleeve-buttons, which are still preserved, are ornamented with the device of the Liberty-cap, which has led to the supposition that the gift came from the Sons of Liberty, though any of the political clubs, or one or more private gentlemen, who knew his circumstances, may have been the donors.

His poverty was well known to the public, and was considered the more notable from the fact that he seemed to have no desire to better his condition, or at least made no efforts to do so; his whole time being devoted to political affairs. These so entirely absorbed him, that his family must, even now, have occasionally suffered for what were considered the necessities of life. But the lack of business talent which characterized his early attempts clung to him through life. The outfit, presented by some of his friends,

on his departure for Congress, was sent to him with a full knowledge of this. The practice of paying the debts of eminent men has been not uncommon in later days. The account above given comes directly from his daughter, Mrs. Wells. Another account, differing somewhat in detail, is found in "The Andrews Correspondence," edited by Winthrop Sargent, and published by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

"The ultimate wish and desire of the *high* government party is to get Samuel Adams out of the way, when they think they may accomplish every of their plans ; but, however some may despise him, he has certainly very many friends. For, not long since, some persons (their names unknown) sent and asked his permission to build him a new barn, the old one being decayed, which was executed in a few days. A second sent to ask leave to repair his house, which was thoroughly effected soon. A third sent to beg the favor of him to call at a tailor's shop, and be measured for a suit of clothes, and choose his cloth, which were finished and sent home for his acceptance. A fourth presented him with a new wig, a fifth with a new hat, a sixth with six pair of the best silk hose, a seventh with six pair of fine thread ditto, an eighth with six pair of shoes, and a ninth modestly inquired of him whether his finances were not rather low than otherwise. He replied, it was true that was the case, but he was very indifferent about these matters, so that his *poor* abilities were of any service to the public; upon which the gentleman obliged him to accept of a purse containing about fifteen or twenty Johannes. I mention this to show you how much he is esteemed here. They value him for his *good* sense, *great* abilities, *amazing* fortitude, *noble* resolution, and *undaunted* courage; being firm and unmoved at all the various reports that were propagated in regard to his being taken up and sent home, notwithstanding he had repeated letters from his *friends*, both in England as well as here, to keep out of the way."¹

The costume of a people has been supposed to have an influence upon the national character. While the classical dress of the ancients is associated with those noble senti-

¹ John Andrews to William Barrell, Boston, Aug. 11, 1774.

ments which have descended from their poets and philosophers, it is not unreasonable to connect the polite gravity of our Revolutionary fathers with their formality of costume, of which many yet living have a vivid recollection, as distinguishing gentlemen of the last century. The Revolutionary dress, not only among the wealthy and aristocratic, but as worn by the plainest republicans of that remarkable era, was typical of a dignity of character in society and in public assemblages which it is more difficult to imagine in connection with the habiliments of the present day. The knee-breeches, buckled shoes, cocked hat, tie-wig, and capacious waistcoat of a hundred years ago are now known only in prints or statues commemorative of that period.

A well-dressed gentleman of Massachusetts is described by one who moved in the best society as wearing his hair powdered and tied in a long queue ; a plaited white stock ; a shirt ruffled at the bosom and over the hands, and fastened at the wrist with gold sleeve-buttons ; a peach-bloom coat with white buttons, lined with white silk, and standing off at the skirts with buckram ; a figured silk vest, divided so that the pockets extended on the thighs ; black silk small-clothes, with large gold or silver knee-buckles ; cotton or silk stockings ; large shoes with short quarters, and buckles to match. This dress, which the writer sketched from the wardrobe of a member of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress in 1776, was not merely the appropriate costume on occasions of ceremony, but was adopted with more or less exactness by the fashionable gentlemen of the day, and belonged to a period much subsequent to that of the full bottomed wig, red roquelet, and gold-headed cane which, earlier in the century, were worn by persons distinguished for their age or wealth.

The popular dress underwent few changes from the middle of the last century to its close. Mr. Sullivan, who visited John Hancock at his house in Beacon Street about the year 1786, pictures him as wearing at midday "a red

velvet cap, within which was one of fine linen ; the edge of this was turned up over the velvet one two or three inches. He wore a blue damask gown, lined with silk, a white plaited stock, a white silk embroidered waistcoat, black silk small-clothes, white silk stockings, and red morocco slippers." This dress was undoubtedly the extreme of fashion, and such as only one of Hancock's wealth and station would assume.

Samuel Adams is described by the same author as "erect in person," and wearing "a gray tie-wig, cocked hat, and red cloak." The Copley painting in Faneuil Hall represents him in 1772, clad in a suit of dark red cloth, cut in the fashion of that day, yet with consistent republican plainness. It was customary for fashionable people to have their hair dressed at a barber's ; and it would appear, from the evidence in the trial of Robinson, after the affray with Otis in 1769, that swords were sometimes worn as an article of dress. The Governor's Council in Massachusetts was perhaps the most august assemblage in the Colonies prior to the Revolution. Selected from among the wealthiest and most intelligent gentlemen of the Province, it approached as nearly as possible to the formality and display usually attaching to the subordinate institutions of royalty. John Adams, in his Autobiography, draws a spirited picture, elsewhere quoted, of the appearance of this body in 1770, when his kinsman faced the Governor in their presence on the day after the Massacre. It is probable that even their humble approach to courtly style gave a tone to manners among certain circles in society ; and when this was deprecated by the sterner republicans, it was replied that the imposing costume and official array served to polish the manners of the Province, besides adding to the dignity of his Majesty's servants.

Wealthy families often sent to England for their fine clothing, and to have articles of apparel dyed. Ladies' dresses of costly material, prior to the taxation troubles, were sometimes brought from London completely made.

Cutlery, spectacles, books, and many valuable appurtenances to the toilet were purchased by agents or friends in London, and forwarded to order.

Fashionable life in the olden time is thus described by a venerable resident of Boston early in the present century : —

“Seventy years ago cocked hats, wigs, and red cloaks were the usual dress of gentlemen; boots were rarely seen, except among military men. Shoestrings were worn only by those who could not buy any sort of buckles. In winter round coats were used, made stiff with buckram; they came down to the knees in front.

“Before the Revolution, boys wore wigs and cocked hats; and boys of genteel families wore cocked hats till within about thirty years.

“Ball dress for gentlemen was silk coat and breeches of the same, and embroidered waistcoats, sometimes white satin breeches. Buckles were fashionable until about fifteen or twenty years, and a man could not have remained in a ball-room with shoestrings. It was usual for the bride, bridegroom, and maids and men attending, to go to church together three successive Sundays after the wedding, with a change of dress each day. A gentleman who deceased not long since appeared the first Sunday in white broadcloth, the second in blue and gold, the third in peach-bloom and pearl buttons. It was the custom to hang the escutcheon of the deceased head of a family out of the window over the front door, from the time of his decease until the funeral. The last instance which is remembered of this was in the case of Governor Hancock’s uncle in 1764. Copies of the escutcheon, painted on black silk, were more anciently distributed among the pall-bearers, rings afterwards, and, until within a few years, gloves. Dr. A. Eliot had a mug full of rings which were presented to him at funerals. Till within about twenty years gentlemen wore powder, and many of them sat from thirty to forty minutes under the barber’s hands to have their hair craped, suffering no inconsiderable pain most of the time from hair pulling, and sometimes from the hot curling-tongs. Crape cushions and hoops were indispensable in full dress till within about thirty years. Sometimes ladies were dressed the day before the party, and slept in easy-chairs to keep their hair in fit condition for the following night. Most ladies went to parties

on foot, if they could not get a cast in a friend's carriage or chaise. Gentlemen rarely had a chance to ride.

"The latest dinner-hour was two o'clock; some officers of the Colonial government dined later occasionally. In genteel families, ladies went to drink tea about four o'clock, and rarely stayed after candlelight in summer. It was fashion for ladies to propose to visit,—not to wait to be sent for.

"The drinking of punch in the forenoon in public houses was a common practice with the most respectable men till about five and twenty years; and evening clubs were very common. The latter, it is said, were more common formerly, as they afforded the means of communion on the state of the country. Dinner-parties were very rare. Wine was very little in use; convivial parties drank punch or toddy. Half-boots came into fashion about thirty years ago. The first pair that appeared in Boston were worn by a young gentleman who came here from New York, and who was more remarkable for his boots than anything else. Within twenty years gentlemen wore scarlet coats with black velvet collars, and very costly buttons of mock pearl, cut steel, or painted glass; and neckcloths edged with lace, and ruffles over the hands. Before the Revolution, from five to six hundred pounds was the utmost of annual expenditure in those families where carriages and correspondent domestics were kept. There were only two or three carriages, that is chariots or coaches, in 1750. Chaises on four wheels, not phaetons, were in use in families of distinction."

On Wednesday, the 10th of August, the four delegates to the Continental Congress met at the house of Thomas Cushing, and rode thence to Coolidge's at Watertown, where they sat down to an entertainment with a large number of gentlemen who had gone thither for the purpose.¹ Here the friends, who had stood side by side in the times which had brought them to the present crisis, took leave of each other. In that company were probably Joseph Warren, John Hancock, William and Samuel Cooper, Paul Revere, Josiah Quincy, Dr. Young, Benjamin Kent, and perhaps Hawley and James Warren. To those who were about leaving their

¹ John Adams's Diary (Works, II. 340). Boston Gazette, August 15, 1774.

native Province, strange and exciting scenes might be opening. They were to unite their counsels with those of the illustrious men of the South,—most of whom were known to them only by their worthy deeds,—for the preservation of American liberty, that it might be transmitted pure and unimpaired to succeeding generations. The parting between Samuel Adams and Josiah Quincy, in whose face the hectic flush of consumption presaged his approaching end, can be imagined. The course of the brilliant young patriot had been watched with peculiar interest by Adams, who might almost be termed his political preceptor. They never saw each other again on earth. There, too, was probably Dr. Adams, lately become a practising physician, and soon to commence his active part in the service of his country. To him his father confided the care of the family, whose name alone, as it afterwards appeared, brought them special hatred and insult from the royal authorities, when attempting with other inhabitants to obtain a pass to quit the town during the siege. The meeting and separation of that company of patriot friends was affectionate and memorable. “About four in the afternoon,” says John Adams, in his contemporary account of the scene, “we took our leave of them amidst the kind wishes and fervent prayers of every man in the company for our health and success. This scene was truly affecting, beyond description affecting.” Gage, in a letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, thus comments on their departure:—

“The delegates, as they are called, from this Province are gone to Philadelphia to meet the rest who are to form the general Congress; and it is thought it will be determined there, whether the town of Boston is to comply with the terms of the Port Bill. It is not possible to guess what a body composed of such heterogeneous matter will determine; but the members from hence, I am assured, will promote the most haughty and insolent resolves, for their plan has ever been, by threats and high-sounding sedition, to terrify and intimidate.”¹

¹ General Gage to the Earl of Dartmouth, August 27, 1774.

Their departure is thus referred to by John Andrews : —

“ Intended to have written you by Robert Treat Paine, who set out with the Committee for the Congress this morning, but did not know of their going till now. Am told they made a very respectable parade in sight of five of the regiments encamped on the Common, being in a coach and four, preceded by two white servants well mounted and armed, with four blacks behind in livery, two on horseback and two footmen. Am in hopes their joint deliberations will effect something for our relief, more particularly to concert such measures as may be adopted by the *mother country*, so as to settle a friendship between us that may be lasting and permanent.”¹

The party travelled in a coach provided for their special convenience. Their journey, which was a succession of enthusiastic receptions, may be traced by John Adams's Diary, in which he industriously noted down the occurrences by the way. At Hartford, where they arrived on the sixth day, they met Silas Deane, afterwards one of the Commissioners to France. Here they dined at the tavern with upwards of thirty gentlemen of the place, of the first character, at their invitation. The company appeared determined to abide by the resolutions of the Congress; and after the dinner, on setting out for Middletown, a number of gentlemen in carriages and on horseback insisted on attending them as far as Wethersfield. Here they ascended the steeple of the meeting-house, and looked upon the most beautiful prospect the writer had ever seen; and Silas Deane entertained them cordially and genteelly at his house with punch, wine, and coffee. The Committee of Correspondence of that town and many other gentlemen called on them.

Continuing their journey, they were surprised at a tavern, seven miles out of New Haven, by an assemblage of carriages and horsemen who had come out to meet them. The sheriff of the county, the constable of the town, and the justices of the peace were in the train, and, as they drew nearer the town, they met a great number more. The bells

¹ John Andrews to William Barrell, August 10, 1774.

were rung as they entered ; the people, men, women, and children, crowded to the doors and windows, as if it were a coronation, and at nine o'clock the cannon were fired.

"These expressions of respect to us," the writer says, "are intended as demonstrations of the sympathy of this people with the Massachusetts Bay and its capital, and to show their expectations from the Congress, and their determination to carry into execution whatever shall be agreed upon. No governor of a province nor general of an army was ever treated with so much ceremony and assiduity as we have been throughout the whole Colony of Connecticut hitherto, but especially all the way from Hartford to New Haven inclusively."¹

While there, Roger Sherman, one of the delegates to the Congress from Connecticut, called upon them at the tavern, "a solid, sensible man." Passing through Milford, Fairfield, Norwalk, Hamford, and Kingsbridge, they arrived at New York on Saturday, the 20th, and remained there six days, making the acquaintance of the principal men, and gauging, as far as possible, the political character of the people, and receiving an embarrassing amount of attentions, invitations, and visits. On the 26th, they crossed to New Jersey, dined at Elizabethtown, and put up in the city of Brunswick, where they remained two days, and passing the Delaware on the 29th, rode to Frankfort, where a number of carriages and gentlemen came out of Philadelphia to meet them, including Mifflin, McKean, and Rutledge. They were cordially welcomed to Philadelphia, when they rode into town, "dirty, dusty, and fatigued." At "the tavern, the most genteel one in America," they were introduced to a number of other gentlemen, one of whom was Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina, the man of all others in America "most like Samuel Adams." As they had corresponded together as early as 1766, it may be supposed that this meeting was accompanied with pleasant reminiscences, and a mutual curiosity in each to see how the person agreed

¹ John Adams's Works, II. 343.

with the preconceived idea. From their arrival until the day Congress met, the Massachusetts delegates continued to make acquaintances, among whom were Patrick Henry, Washington, Richard Henry Lee (who had already corresponded with Samuel Adams, and was henceforth to be his most confidential friend in the successive Congresses), Charles Thompson, John Sullivan, Peyton Randolph, Dr. Witherspoon, Henry Middleton, John Dickinson, Stephen Hopkins, John Jay, and many other great characters of the sister Colonies. John Adams, who still faithfully kept his Diary, gives us the outlines of dinners, invitations, and visits. He describes the personal appearance of several of the delegates, and the fears, hopes, characteristics, jealousies, and variant opinions of many. On the evening of the 1st of September, such of the members as had arrived met at Smith's new tavern, and probably arranged the preliminaries for the approaching Congress. The day before, the Massachusetts gentlemen had "removed their lodgings to the house of Miss Jane Port in Arch Street, about half-way between Front Street and Second Street," by which it appears the four occupied one house together.¹

¹ John Adams's Diary (Works, II. 361).

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The First Congress assembles at Philadelphia. — Eloquence of Patrick Henry. — Harmonizing Influence of Adams. — He heals Sectarian Jealousies. — The First Prayer in Congress. — Appointment of the Committees. — Affairs in Massachusetts. — The Province pursues the Policy laid down by Adams. — Suffolk County Convention. — Warren drafts its Resolutions. — Their Effect upon the Congress at Philadelphia. — Adams defeats the Plans of Galloway. — His Influence felt at once in Philadelphia and New England. — His untiring Energy. — Fears in Congress that the hardy New-Englanders would eventually overrun the South. — Adams opposes all Concessions to Great Britain. — He is the Originator of Independence. — Contemporary Evidence of this. — His Plans to popularize the Idea of a Separation. — The Declaration of Rights. — Correspondence between Adams and the Boston Patriots. — They recognize him as their Leader and write to him for Directions. — Opinions in England concerning Adams. — The King inquires about him. — Critical Condition of Affairs in Boston.

THE delegates to the Continental Congress, fifty-three in number, met on the 5th of September at the City Tavern, and walked thence to Carpenter's Hall, where, after an inspection, the room was pronounced suitable for the purpose. It was originally built for the Society of House Carpenters of Philadelphia, and contained committee conveniences and a library. Peyton Randolph was elected Chairman of Congress, and Charles Thomson Secretary. The organization having been effected, a discussion as to the method of voting arose, in which the question whether a little Colony should have as much weight as a great one was considered, pending which the Congress adjourned.

The next day, when they came together, a long and deep silence fell upon the members. Conscious of the vast responsibility resting upon them, and that their proceedings were watched with anxious interest by all Europe as well as by their own countrymen, each hesitated to open the debate. The Massachusetts delegates had unquestionably

adopted it as their policy to allow the lead to be taken by others.

“The great object here,” said Gage, writing from Boston, “has been to persuade the other Colonies to make the cause of Boston the common cause of America; and when the deputies for holding the general Congress assemble, the Boston faction, it is probable, will pay the rest the compliment of taking their advice.”¹

There was then as since a jealousy of the Northerners, who, especially Samuel Adams, were regarded by the more wealthy and aristocratic members as men of desperate fortunes with nothing to lose; and it was with a thorough appreciation of this that Adams and his colleagues wished to have it appear that they were but following the counsels of the others. This course was necessary, not only to maintain the general sympathy of the other members for Massachusetts, but for the moral effect of the action of the rest of America on measures of government which had been directed against Massachusetts alone. The post of honor had been given to Virginia, by electing one of her delegates President, and now Patrick Henry electrified the Assembly with a strain of impassioned reasoning and lofty eloquence. He recited the wrongs inflicted on the Colonies, asserted the necessity of union, declared that, by the acts of Parliament, all government was dissolved, and advocated a new system of representation and the preservation in its purity of the democratic part of the Constitution.² Murmurs of applause succeeded his speech; and, in the debate which followed, Lynch, the elder Rutledge, Richard Henry Lee, Jay, and Gadsden engaged. As the Congress had resolved to proceed with closed doors, and the members had been put under “the strongest obligations of honor to keep the proceedings secret until the majority should direct them to be made public,” no report was ever made of these debates. An appar-

¹ Gage to the Earl of Dartmouth, July 20, 1774.

² Bancroft, VII. 128, 129.

ent unanimity was imperatively necessary to secure the intended effect upon the world, and the publication of the arguments for and against any proposed measures would probably have detracted from the idea of a perfect agreement, and, as many wealthy and influential members present had protested against the usurpations of Britain, but were greatly disinclined to anything like a decided rupture, these discussions must have been warm and frequent. John Adams, in his *Diary*, makes short notes of the remarks of some, and Bancroft has woven the opinions of several into his narrative. From these sources of information, it would appear that neither Samuel Adams nor either of his colleagues took a prominent part in the debates. But wise counsels accomplished, perhaps, as much as eloquence.

Transferred from a provincial to a continental theatre, where, instead of acting merely in conjunction with his fellow-townsmen, he was brought into connection with the principal men of the other Colonies, Samuel Adams now became the guiding intellect of the Congress, as he had before been the leading spirit of New England. With some of these characters, he was familiar by correspondence; but everywhere his own name was known, and himself looked upon as the "Chief of the Revolution." His name appearing so often at the head of important committees; his origination of the important measures, since the commencement of the controversy with England, measures which had been the keystone of the general opposition throughout the continent; the extent of his private correspondence, which spread his opinions throughout America, and made him the prominent Colonial figure in England; his courage and decision of character; his great influence in the press; his reputation for wisdom, which had been established everywhere; and the fact of his having already become the principal object of royal vengeance,—these, together with his dignified presence, caused him to be regarded in Congress as the most conspicuous member of that body. He gave no time to the

keeping of memoranda of passing events, and only fugitive evidences can be gathered to establish his powerful influence; but these sufficiently fix his position in that body of the foremost men in America. All his great qualities concurred to give weight to his opinions; but they could as yet be advanced only with caution and after a careful study of those about him.

His first act in the Congress was one of conciliation. A chief difficulty which thinking men had anticipated was the difference of religious opinion among the members, — the New-Englanders being mainly, if not all, Congregationalists, and the New York and Southern delegates, Episcopalians. There were also Quakers and Presbyterians; and it seemed unlikely that such elements could be blended sufficiently to unite in prayer at the opening of the proceedings, — an indispensable feature at that day. The contrast in creeds was not alone of religious significance. It involved, also, strong political influences, and it was important to harmonize these as a preliminary to the removal of other obstacles. Samuel Adams was a strict Congregationalist, and it has been said of him that, “in a rigid religious community, he was an example in severity of morals and the scrupulous observance of every ordinance.” Those who knew those traits in his character would, perhaps, have singled him out as the last one to yield or make any concession. But he now disproved the erroneous opinion that some historians have conveyed of him, that, in his austere piety, he was not superior to the narrow punctilious bigotry and stubborn self-will of his Provincial ancestors.¹ When it was proposed to open the Congress with prayer, Jay and Rutledge objected, owing to the great difference in religious belief. Adams was prepared for the occasion, and, with admirable tact, removed a difficulty which at first appeared formidable. The story is briefly told by himself in a letter written to Joseph Warren, a few days afterwards, which Warren published in Boston. At this

¹ Grahame, II. 418.

time the Loyalists in Massachusetts, as well as in the other Colonies, were generally of the Church of England ; consequently, in New England, the prejudice was strongly against Episcopalians. Warren now essayed to second the views of Adams, by proving that members of that Church were not necessarily all Tories. He writes to " Messieurs Printers " : —

" As I have been informed that the conduct of some few persons of the Episcopal denomination, in maintaining principles inconsistent with the rights and liberties of mankind, has given offence to some of the zealous friends of this country, I think myself obliged to publish the following extract of a letter dated September 9th, 1774, which I received from my worthy and patriotic friend, Mr. Samuel Adams, a member of the Congress now sitting in Philadelphia, by which it appears that, however injudicious some individuals may have been, the gentlemen of the Established Church of England are men of the most just and liberal sentiments, and are high in the esteem of the most sensible and resolute defenders of the rights of the people of this continent.

" And I earnestly request my countrymen to avoid everything which our enemies may make use of to prejudice our Episcopal brethren against us, by representing us as disposed to disturb them in the free exercise of their religious privileges, to which we know they have the most undoubted claim, and which, from a real regard to the honor and interest of my country and the rights of mankind, I hope they will enjoy unmolested as long as the name of America is known in the world.

" J. WARREN.

" ' After settling the mode of voting, which is by giving each Colony an equal voice, it was agreed to open the business with prayer. As many of our *warmest friends are members of the Church of England*, [I] thought it prudent, as well on that as on some other accounts, to move that the service should be performed by a clergyman of that denomination. Accordingly the lessons of the day and prayer were read by the Rev. Mr. Duché, who afterwards made a most excellent extemporary prayer, by which he discovered himself to be a gentleman of sense and piety, and a warm advocate for the religious and civil rights of America.' " ¹

¹ Boston Gazette, Sept. 26, 1774. Force's American Archives, Fourth Series. I. 802.

The letter, of which the above is an extract, is missing. John Adams, writing to his wife not long afterwards, describes this scene more particularly.

“When the Congress first met, Mr. Cushing made a motion that it should be opened with prayer. It was opposed by Mr. Jay of New York, and Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina, because we were so divided in religious sentiments, — some Episcopalians, some Quakers, some Anabaptists, some Presbyterians, and some Congregationalists, — that we could not join in the same act of worship. Mr. Samuel Adams arose, and said, ‘he was no bigot, and could hear a prayer from a gentleman of piety and virtue, who was at the same time a friend to his country. He was a stranger in Philadelphia, but had heard that Mr. Duché (Dushay they pronounce it) deserved that character, and therefore he moved that Mr. Duché, an Episcopal clergyman, might be desired to read prayers to the Congress tomorrow morning. The motion was seconded and passed in the affirmative. Mr. Randolph, our President, waited on Mr. Duché, and received for answer that, if his health would permit, he certainly would. Accordingly, next morning, he appeared with his clerk and in his pontificals, and read several prayers in the established form, and then read the Collect for the 7th day of September, which was the Thirty-fifth Psalm. You must remember this was the next morning after we heard the horrible rumor of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning.

“After this, Mr. Duché, unexpectedly to everybody, struck out into an extemporary prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present. I must confess I never heard a better prayer, or one so well pronounced. Episcopalian as he is, Dr. Cooper himself never prayed with such fervor, such ardor, such earnestness and pathos, and in language so elegant and sublime, for America, for the Congress, for the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially the town of Boston. It has had an excellent effect upon everybody here.”¹

The result of this timely measure was most salutary, and led the way to that eventual harmony with which Congress

¹ John Adams's Works, II. 368, 369. Bancroft, VII. 131.

closed. The powerful New York Episcopalians were gratified by the unexpected concession, and, with those of the South, it served to remove in some degree the prejudices which distance and difficulty of communication assisted to create. Joseph Reed, who had met Samuel Adams in Boston in the summer of 1769, was now in Philadelphia. John Adams says, in his *Diary* : —

“ Mr. Reed returned with Mr. Adams and me to our lodgings, and a very sociable, agreeable, and communicative evening we had. He says we were never guilty of a more masterly stroke of policy than in moving that Mr. Duché might read prayers. It has had a very good effect,” &c.¹

This “ first prayer in Congress ” has given rise to many poems and artistic works, and has been the basis of innumerable patriotic speeches. It might well suggest sentiments of rythmical beauty, sublimity, and pathos. The scene was the most momentous that had yet occurred in America. Other congresses had been held, but not for such a purpose. The previous assemblages of that description had entertained no thoughts of shielding themselves from the tyranny of their fellow-subjects. Parliament and the King had always been regarded as the common protectors ; but now, the representatives of two and a half millions of people had met for the redress of intolerable grievances ; to adopt measures of retaliation ; and for the severance of all commercial relations between America and Great Britain, until the iron hand of oppression was removed. There stood Washington, as yet unconscious of the mighty space he was to fill in the eyes of the world and future generations, Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Gadsden, Rutledge, Samuel and John Adams, and the brightest intellects of America, — each feeling his heart thrill with the inspired accents of a prayer uttered under the heaving excitement of the news from the North, that Boston had been bombarded by the British fleet, and

¹ John Adams's Works, II. 377, 378.

that Massachusetts and Connecticut were rising in arms. The rumor soon proved to be incorrect, but its effect was experienced in the additional fervor of Duché's supplication.

On the same day Congress appointed one committee, "to state the rights of the Colonies in general, the several instances in which those rights are violated or infringed, and the means most proper to be pursued for obtaining a restoration of them," and another to examine and report the several statutes which affect the trade and manufactures of the Province. The first consisted of two delegates from each Province, and Samuel and John Adams were chosen for Massachusetts. The peculiar wording of the resolution giving rise to this important committee is significant. It is almost precisely that of Samuel Adams's resolution two years before, when he brought forward his project in Boston for the system of committees of correspondence. The coincidence is so remarkable that, in the absence of all data on the subject, it may be inferred that he who suggested the one more than probably proposed the other. In the writings of Samuel Adams, after his first proposal of a Continental Congress, he had already pointed out this approaching statement of the rights of the Colonies, showing that he considered it should be the paramount duty of that body.

Meanwhile, exciting events were occurring in Massachusetts, where Joseph Warren, now the director-in-chief, pursued the measures which had been concerted with Samuel Adams before the departure of the latter for Congress. Adams had arranged with his confidential friends of the Committee that they should keep him informed of events in his native Province. Of their correspondence, only a few mutilated pieces have been preserved. On the day before he left Boston, we have seen him presiding at a meeting in Faneuil Hall, where the preliminary steps towards a county congress had been taken. "I shall take care," says Warren soon after, in a letter to his friend, "to follow your advice respecting the county meeting, which, depend upon it, will have

important consequences.”¹ And Benjamin Kent writes: “At your particular recommendation to me and others at parting, a county congress,” &c.² The occasion for this important measure was not long delayed. Most of the new Councillors appointed by writ of mandamus, under the new act, were accepted and sworn in, but were soon forced by the people to resign. Late in August, the Committee of Worcester suggested a plan which resulted in a meeting in Boston, where a Provincial Congress was resolved upon. Middlesex acted first on these resolutions; and one hundred and fifty delegates met at Concord, determined to support the laws and liberties of their country. Everywhere the spirit of resistance was aroused; military reviews were common; and at times thousands of armed men were on foot prepared for battle. Gage, alarmed at the aspect of affairs, moved the capital from Salem back to Boston, and wrote home for more troops. The seizure by the royal forces of a quantity of powder stored at Charlestown, and of field-pieces at Cambridge, brought together an enraged multitude, who obliged the Lieutenant-Governor, Oliver, and other officers, to resign.³ Gage erected fortifications on the Neck, the only avenue leading from Boston, and refused to cease operations when addressed by the Selectmen. His Excellency had entered the Province with the assurance that he should easily

¹ Joseph Warren to S. Adams, August 24, 1774.

² Benjamin Kent to S. Adams, August 20, 1774.

General Gage must have had an inkling as to the origin of this movement. Writing to the Earl of Dartmouth from Salem, August 27, 1774, he says, in relation to the proceedings of inland counties: “It is agreed that popular fury was never greater in this Province than at present; and it has taken its rise from the old source at Boston, though it has appeared first at a distance.” And again, enclosing one of the circulars calling for a meeting of delegates to the county congress: “The copy enclosed of a letter from the Boston Committee of Correspondence to the several counties will sufficiently evince the intention of those leaders who by said letter, emissaries, and other means, have contrived, while Boston affects quiet and tranquillity, to raise a flame,” &c.

³ Barry, II. 489.

carry the edicts of Parliament into force ; but he now began to comprehend the nature of the task that had been assigned him. The whole country was in a blaze of excitement and indignation, and the torch of war might be lighted "at any moment.

Adams and Warren had agreed that when the Suffolk County Congress met, the latter should have ready a memorial to the general Congress.¹ That convention assembled at Dedham on the 6th of September, where Warren, on the 9th, presented his memorial, resolving that no obedience was due to either, or any part of the recent acts of Parliament, which were rejected as the attempts of a wicked administration to enslave America. They resolved to act merely on the defensive so long as such conduct might be vindicated by the principles of reason and self-preservation, but no longer ; and to seize as hostages the servants of the Crown as an offset to the apprehension of any persons in Suffolk County, who had rendered themselves conspicuous in the defence of violated liberty. A Provincial Congress was recommended, and all tax collectors were exhorted to retain moneys in their hands until government should be constitutionally organized. For deliberate boldness and directness of purpose, these resolves exceeded anything that had yet been adopted in America. Warren, their author, immediately despatched them to the general Congress.

On the 21st of September, in a town meeting at Faneuil Hall, Cushing, Samuel Adams, Hancock, and Phillips were unanimously chosen Representatives for the General Assembly, which was to meet at Salem on the 5th of October.² This election seems to have been held rather as a legal form, than with the belief that the Governor would conform with his proclamation calling a meeting of the General Court, for it must have been known that the Congressional delegates could not return from Philadelphia in time for the

¹ Bancroft, VII. 122.

² Boston Gazette, Sept. 26, 1774. Boston Town Records, Sept. 21, 1774.

Assembly.¹ The town had already made choice of Warren, Church, and Appleton to serve in the Provincial Congress to meet at Concord on the second Tuesday in October.

Paul Revere reached Philadelphia on the 16th, with the Suffolk resolves, directed to the Massachusetts delegates. They were introduced on the following day, when, having been read "with great applause," and unanimously approved, they were ordered to be published in the newspapers, and doubtless their effect was to arouse the popular enthusiasm to a still greater degree. Samuel Adams, writing to Dr. Chauncy soon after, enclosed the resolutions by which Congress recommended a continuance of the charitable contributions from the other Colonies in aid of Boston, and adds, that these resolves gave but a faint idea of the spirit of the members. "I think I may assure you," he says, "that America will make a point of supporting Boston to the utmost."²

Conciliation was the desire of nearly every member of this Congress, but they were for some time divided in their opinions as to the proper method of redress. One of the delegates from Philadelphia, Galloway, a Loyalist, endeavored to disunite and distract the counsels of the others; and when, towards the close of the session, it was resolved, though not unanimously, to approve of the opposition of the people of Massachusetts to the late acts of Parliament, and, in case of need, for all America to support them, he, with Duane, desired leave to enter their protests against the measure, which

¹ This is shown by the instructions to the Representatives: "And as we have occasion to believe that a conscientious discharge of your duty will produce your dissolution as a House of Representatives, we do hereby empower and instruct you to join with the members who may be sent from this and the neighboring towns in the Province, and to meet with them at a time agreed on, in a general Provincial Congress, to act upon such matters as may come before you, in such a manner as shall appear to you most conducive to the true interests of this town and Province, and most likely to preserve the liberties of all America."

² S. Adams to Dr. Chauncy, Philadelphia, Sept. 19, 1774.

was refused.¹ This man appears not only to have acted as a systematical opponent of the plans of Congress, but, despite the obligation of honor under which every member was placed not to divulge any of the proceedings, to have served as a spy for the Ministry, and disclosed, with evident exaggerations, whatever would work to the disadvantage of the Americans. As late Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Assembly, his statements, on his arrival in England, were generally believed. He proposed to the Congress, as a means of accommodation, a plan evidently digested before that body assembled, for a union of the Colonies under a Grand Council, who, in conjunction with the British Parliament, were to regulate Colonial affairs.² This was, to a certain extent, reviving the exploded doctrine of a representation in Parliament. It was debated, however, and found sufficient advocates to come within one vote of being adopted. It would appear that Samuel Adams exerted all his powers to prevent the passage of the measure. Galloway, referring to this occasion, says in a note in his Examination: —

“The plan proposed by Mr. Galloway gave the independent faction much uneasiness, as they saw it contained the great outlines of a union with Great Britain, which were approved of and supported by a considerable majority of the gentlemen of abilities, fortune, and influence, then in Congress, from whence they justly concluded that it would be agreeable to the people at large; and should it be adopted as the ground of reconciliation, their scheme of independence would be totally frustrated. Mr. Adams and his party left no means in their power unessayed, to prevail on the members of Congress to reject it on the second reading, and, lest this step should fail of success, to incense the mob in Philadelphia against it. At this time the minds of the lower ranks of people in Philadelphia, who were governed in a great degree by Mr. Adams, being prepared

¹ Gordon's American Revolution, I. 410.

² Hildreth, III. 46. Galloway's Testimony before the House of Commons.

for the most violent measures, Mr. Galloway and his friends thought their personal safety depended on not renewing the motion."¹

However great may have been the influence of Samuel Adams among the "lower ranks of people," from his known democratic principles, it is not probable that he would have excited any popular violence against Galloway or any other Loyalist. It seems hardly probable that, under the injunction of secrecy, the public could have been so well informed of the proceedings of Congress, nor is it likely that popular clamor would have influenced the members in their deliberations. The same writer, in another work, thus refers to the parties in Congress and to the overruling influence of Samuel Adams:—

"While the two parties in Congress remained thus during three weeks on an equal balance, the republicans were calling to their assistance the aid of their factions without. Continued expresses were employed between Philadelphia and Boston. These were under the management of Samuel Adams, — a man who, though by no means remarkable for brilliant abilities, yet is equal to most men in popular intrigue and the management of a faction. He eats little, drinks little, sleeps little, thinks much, and is most decisive and indefatigable in the pursuit of his objects. It was this man, who, by his superior application, managed at once the faction in Congress at Philadelphia and the factions in New England. Whatever these patriots in Congress wished to have done by their colleagues without, to induce General Gage, then at the head of his Majesty's army at Boston, to give them a pretext for violent opposition, or to promote their measures in Congress, Mr. Adams advised and directed to be done; and when done, it was despatched by express to Congress. By one of these expresses came the inflammatory resolves of the county of Suffolk, which contained a complete declaration of war against Great Britain."²

¹ Examination of Joseph Galloway before the House of Commons, London, 1779, 8°, pp. 52, 53.

² Historical and Political Reflections of the Rise and Progress of the American Revolution, by Joseph Galloway, London, 1780.

The idea seems to have been generally prevalent for some time after the Congress had adjourned. A Loyalist merchant at Annapolis, writing to a friend in Philadelphia, denounces the "treasonable purposes projected by Adams and the Eastern republicans to carry on a formal rebellion in the Colonies."

"The conduct," continues this writer, "of the New York Assembly, in acting consistently with their own dignity, and daring to speak the true constitutional language, was received amongst us with the most fervent plaudits. We wish your Pennsylvanians had taken the lead in so glorious a cause. Oh! what a falling off was that of your Assembly, to approve of the measures which the majority of the members of it, in their hearts, most sincerely condemned. In such a government, a very different determination was expected; but Adams with his crew, and the haughty sultans of the South, juggled the whole conclave of the delegates."¹

The correspondence referred to by Galloway, as maintained between Samuel Adams and his friends in Boston, was evidently known outside their particular circle. A writer in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, who had recently been converted to the Loyalist side, professes to expose, in his recantation, the proceedings of his late associates in one of the interior Committees of Correspondence. Alluding to the effect of the Suffolk resolves, he says:—

"I could not help at that time seriously observing that I was fearful we went too fast; the Continental Congress, which was then sitting, might not justify such very spirited resolves, and then our cause would be injured, as we must certainly acquiesce in their determinations. Therefore I apprehended it would be most prudent for us to take our hints from them, rather than lead. The reply was, that our delegates were men of sense, and some of them good speakers; one of them particularly could carry almost any point he was determined upon, therefore they must have great influence in the Congress; and as there was a continued correspondence kept

¹ Force's *American Archives*, Fourth Series, I. 1194.

up between the Committee of Boston and the delegates, there was no doubt but they were apprised of them previously to their publication, and depended upon their being adopted by the Continental Congress. Accordingly they were adopted and approved of, though they do not appear in the pamphlet containing their doings.”¹

Galloway must have known something of the letters received by Samuel Adams from his friends in Boston ; for his allusion to the connection between him and the measures of the patriots there, during his absence, tallies exactly with such of the correspondence as has been preserved. During the questions which arose on the resolution to export no more merchandise to Great Britain, and previous to the signing of the agreement to that effect, Rutledge and two of his South Carolina colleagues seceded from the Congress, and for several days all business ceased. Gadsden, however, could not be induced to withdraw, and was ready to sign the association, and the dissatisfied members were finally persuaded to return, rice being excepted from the prohibited articles.² Gordon, referring to this particular time, says :—

“In some stage of their proceedings, the danger of a rupture with Britain was urged as a plan for certain concessions. Upon this, Mr. S. Adams rose up, and, among other things, said in substance: ‘I should advise persisting in our struggle for liberty, though it was revealed from Heaven that nine hundred and ninety nine were to perish, and only one of a thousand to survive and retain his liberty. One such freeman must possess more virtue and enjoy more happiness than a thousand slaves ; and let him propagate his like, and transmit to them what he hath so nobly preserved.’ ”³

The historian naively adds, that this “was a flight of patriotism, serving to show the temper of the speaker ; but the sentiment is so hyperbolical as to throw it far beyond the reach of practice.”

¹ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, II. 105.

² Bancroft, VII. 147.

³ Gordon's American Revolution, I. 410. Bancroft, VII. 151.

The Congress remained in session until near the close of October. Not the slightest vestige of a record remains among the papers of Samuel Adams by which to identify his part in the proceedings, other than the general idea conveyed by the virulent attacks of the Loyalist writers and the hints in contemporary letters. We may, however, by inference, trace the evidence of his mind in the proceedings. The Declaration of Rights and of their Violation, a non-importation and non-consumption league, the approval of the opposition in Massachusetts to the acts of Parliament, and the adoption of the very ideas of Samuel Adams in several of these papers, point with silent eloquence to his ever active agency. Indeed, it would be wholly inconsistent with probability to suppose that the energetic character who has thus far been traced as the great leader of the Revolution should have now suddenly ceased to exert any influence; especially in the deliberations of a body of far greater importance than any that Adams had yet entered. It has already been shown that the policy of the Massachusetts delegates was to take little part in the debates, and to allow others to lead on the floor, while their own particular weight might be more quietly exerted. They may have deviated from this course towards the close of the Congress, when the members had become better acquainted; and it is very probable that the Massachusetts members were not silent when the subjects called particularly for explanation from Northerners. During the efforts of Galloway and his party to establish a General Council, to act with the British Parliament, Samuel Adams evidently spoke in no measured terms against the plan, as is shown by Gordon's allusions to his remarks. The Declaration of Rights exists in an unknown handwriting, thought to somewhat resemble that of Major Sullivan of New Hampshire, — a fact which may have led John Adams, in his autobiographical account of this subject, written thirty years afterwards, to attribute the Violation of Rights to him. But since the handwriting is

unknown, and cannot be attributed to any member, it is as likely to be a copy by some amanuensis for whoever originally drafted it. John Adams must have forgotten the fact that Samuel Adams was on the committee, but leaves it to be inferred that only himself represented Massachusetts in deciding upon the Declaration. The name of Samuel Adams appears first for Massachusetts, and little could have escaped his careful revision. On comparing this Declaration of Rights with the previous writings of Samuel Adams, the similarity of expression and the repetition of sentences is so remarkable as to render it more than probable that his hand was engaged on it, either in drafting or revising.¹

Mr. Barry, in his learned and carefully written History of Massachusetts, says: "The Declaration of Rights [in the Congress of 1774] was substantially the same as that adopted by the people of Boston, an abstract of which has already been given." The historian here refers to the pamphlet issued by the Boston Committee of Correspondence in 1772, above mentioned. Upon comparing the two papers, the correctness of this observation is at once apparent; and there can be no question that the author of the one had the other before him or in his mind while writing the report for the committee of Congress.

The resolutions, instructing the committee appointed to prepare an address to the King, are repetitions of similar opinions and declarations by Samuel Adams. In his Appeal to the World, in 1769, he says: "In short, the grievances which lie heavily upon us, we shall never think redressed,

¹ Other coincidences will be found in the Boston Instructions in 1764; the letters written in 1765 to gentlemen in England; the Massachusetts Resolves in 1765; the Petition to the King in 1768; the Essays by "Vindex"; the Circular Letter to the other Assemblies; the Letter of the House to Lord Hillsborough; the same to the Marquis of Rockingham, — all in 1768; the resolves of the House, Jan. 29, 1769; the resolves of the town of Boston, Nov. 2, 1772; the Rights of the Colonists in 1772; and many other state papers and political essays by Samuel Adams during the past ten years. (See also, *ante*, I. 501, 502, note.)

until *every act* passed by the British Parliament for the express purpose of raising a revenue upon us, without our consent, is repealed ; till the American Board of the Commissioners of the Customs is dissolved, the troops recalled, and things are restored to the state they were in before the late extraordinary measures of administration took place.”¹ It is probable, too, that Lynch and Samuel Adams, who were on the committee together to draft a letter to Gage, on the subject of the fortifications on Boston Neck, had consulted on this very point with Cushing. Gordon says : “ The like sentiment was confirmed by a subsequent letter from another quarter, after a designed conference upon the subject with Thomas Cushing and Samuel Adams, Esqrs., of Boston, and Thomas Lynch, Esq., of South Carolina.”² This stipulation, of being placed as they were at the close of the last war, that is, before the revenue acts were passed, is embraced as a vital principle in the address to the King and to the people of Great Britain. The Declaration of Rights, embodying a non-consumption and non-importation of British goods ; the addresses to the King, the people of England, and those of Canada and the British American Colonies ; and a letter to the agent of the Colonies in England, — were prepared and finally adopted. These comprise the published papers of the Congress, and occupied about seven weeks in the discussion and arrangement of their terms.

Letters were meantime passing between Samuel Adams and his friends in Boston, in which, on his part, he encouraged his townsmen with the outlines, as far as his obligation to silence would permit, of what occurred immediately relating to Massachusetts.

To Joseph Warren, he says : —

¹ Compare the True Sentiments of America, 1768 ; letter of the House to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and other papers in that collection written by Samuel Adams. See also letter of the Boston Committee to —, with the Appeal to the World, Oct. 23, 1769 (*ante*, I. 284, 285).

² Gordon's American Revolution, I. 402.

"I wrote you yesterday by the post. A frequent communication at this critical juncture is necessary. As the all-important American cause so much depends upon each Colony's acting agreeable to the sentiments of the whole, it must be useful for you to know the sentiments which are entertained here of the temper and conduct of our Province. Heretofore, we have been accounted by many intemperate and rash; but now we are universally applauded as cool and judicious, as well as spirited and brave. This is the character we sustain in Congress. There is, however, a certain degree of jealousy in the minds of some, that we aim at total independency, not only of the mother country, but of the Colonies, too; and that, as we are a hardy and brave people, we shall in time overrun them all. However groundless this jealousy may be, it ought to be attended to, and is of weight in your deliberations on the subject of your last letter.

"I spent yesterday afternoon and evening with Mr. Dickinson.¹ He is a true Bostonian. It is his opinion that if Boston can remain on the defensive, the liberties of America, which that town have so nobly contended for, will be secured. The Congress have, in their resolve of the 17th instant, given their sanction to the resolutions of the county of Suffolk, one of which is to act merely upon the defensive so long as such conduct may be justified by reason and the principles of self-preservation, — *but no longer*. They have great dependence upon your tried patience and fortitude. They suppose you mean to defend your civil Constitution. They strongly recommend perseverance and a firm and temperate conduct, and give you a full pledge of their united efforts in your behalf. They have not yet come to final resolutions. It becomes them to be deliberate. I have been assured, in private conversation with individuals, that if you should be driven to the necessity of acting in self-defence of your lives or liberties, you would be justified by their constituents, and openly supported by all the means in their power. But whether they will ever be prevailed upon to think it necessary for you to set up another form of government, I very much ques-

¹ John Adams, in his Diary for Sept. 24, says: "Dined with Mr. Charles Thomson, with only Mr. Dickinson, his lady and niece, in company. A most delightful afternoon we had. . . . Mr. Dickinson gave us his thoughts and correspondence very freely."

tion, for the reason I have suggested. It is of the greatest importance that the American opposition should be united, and that it should be conducted so as to concur with the opposition of our friends in England.”¹

A letter received by Adams about this time gives him a description of the excitement for many miles around Boston, when the false alarm was given that the town was bombarded by the British fleet. The news spread with unexampled rapidity, and, in less than twenty-four hours, more than thirty thousand men were under arms, and marching towards Boston, and had proceeded twenty or thirty miles before they were undeceived. One body came from Connecticut under command of Putnam.

“By the enclosed papers,” wrote Dr. Young, “you will perceive the temper of your countrymen in the condition your every wish,

¹ Samuel Adams to Joseph Warren, Philadelphia, Sept. 25, 1774. This apprehension that New-Englanders would eventually overrun and subjugate the South was common among the Southern statesmen. It extended far into the war of the Revolution, and there are indications of it during Washington’s administrations and to the close of the century. General Greene, in a letter to Samuel Ward, dated at Prospect Hill, Dec. 31, 1775, says, referring to this Congress:—

“From whence originates that groundless jealousy of the New England delegates? I believe there is nothing more remote from their thoughts than designs unfavorable to the other Colonies. For my own part, I abhor the thought, and cannot help thinking it highly injurious to the New England people, who ever have been distinguished for their justice and moderation. I mentioned this subject to Mr. Lynch and Colonel Harrison, who assured me there was no such sentiment prevailing in Congress, nor among the Southern inhabitants of any respectability. I am sorry to find they were mistaken.”

Joseph Warren, in a letter to Adams, May 14, 1775, suggests the sanctioning by Congress of a *civil* government for Massachusetts in order to calm the apprehensions of Southerners as to New England aggressions. General Gage, writing to Lord Dartmouth, Oct. 15, 1775, speaks of the reported “divisions in Congress, and jealousy of the New England members.” Samuel Adams, as “Candidus,” in one of his essays, written in January, 1776, at Philadelphia (see Chap. XXXIX.), endeavors to allay the fears of the Quakers that the Northern Presbyterians would overrun them after a separation from England. A particular allusion to it will be found in a letter of Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, Feb. 28, 1778 (see, *post*, Chap. XLVII.); and also a letter of George Clymer to Josiah Quincy, June 13, 1774 (*Life of Quincy*, pp. 164–168).

every sigh, for years past, panted to find it; thoroughly aroused, and unanimously in earnest. Something very important will inevitably come of it. That treacherous, sneaking, and cowardly action of seizing our Province powder set all the country in a flame. Every one now feels the matter coming home to him. It gave me much pleasure to see the behavior of the people of Cambridge. When Dr. Warren and I arrived there, Judge Danforth was addressing perhaps four thousand people in the open air; and such was the order of that great assembly, that not a whisper interrupted the low voice of that feeble old man from being heard by the whole body. And when their committee had heard and were satisfied of Colonel Phipps's vindication of his conduct, and promise to call in his *veneris*, and marshalled them to take their minds upon it, they kept their particular stations for three hours in the scorching sun of the hottest day we have had this summer. Such patient endurance is certainly a principal ingredient in the composition of that characteristic emphatically styled a good soldier. The *Western Post* tells us that the people from the river had reached Worcester, Shrewsbury, &c., when they were met by expresses, telling them that the business was over; and it merrily said, that, had not Worcester men been absent themselves, the town would not have held the volunteers. The smallest computation was twenty thousand."¹

¹ Dr. Thomas Young to Samuel Adams, Sept. 4, 1774. This letter was doubtless shown to Cæsar Rodney. See Niles's *Principles and Acts of the Revolution*, pp. 339, 340.

Dr. Young was among the earliest and most uncompromising of the Boston patriots. He was a member of the Committee of Correspondence, and a valued friend of Samuel Adams. In November, 1772, a Dr. Aaron Davis had published in one of the papers an attack upon Dr. Young for his religious and political opinions. In this instance, as in the case of Dr. Chauncy, in March, 1769, Mr. Adams assumed the cause of his friend, which involved an issue of great and immediate importance; and though the Doctor had prepared an answer himself, the publishers of the *Boston Gazette* state that it was omitted, as space for that subject had been pre-engaged by "*Vindex*." The Tory writer is handled without mercy. "The weakness of an adversary," says Mr. Adams, "with a man of understanding, will frequently disarm him of his resentment. Who would choose to enter the list when even victory is attended with disgrace? Aaron Davis, as a huckster of small wares within the bar-room, or laudably vending milk and water, might have grubbed on unnoticed and not superlatively contemptible. But when he so far mistakes his proper department as to blunder into the field of politics, and assume a

This letter referred to the action of the people immediately after the seizure of the powder stored by the Province at Charlestown, when the multitude repaired to Cambridge, and obliged Chief-Justice Oliver and other important officers to resign. Another is from Dr. Church. In common with those from Warren, Pitts, Kent, and the other leaders who remained in Boston, it is an unmistakable evidence of the controlling influence of Samuel Adams in directing political movements, and of the paternal regard in which all held his advice. Every letter recurs to the parting instructions of the chief; and, as the prospect darkened over the land, they longed for his return to resume the helm. Church says:—

“Your most valued favor by Mr. Revere I received, and am happy to find such unanimity and firmness in your important councils. You cannot conceive, and I believe I need not assure you, that, considering the ticklish, the precarious, the hazardous situation of public matters, a state of suspense is extremely painful. We are eternally in effort. I remember *your instructions to the Committee* before you departed, and have endeavored (boasting apart) not to be the most backward in doing my duty. We meet daily,—daily occurrences demand our attention. An armed truce is the sole tenure by which the inhabitants of Boston possess life, liberty, and property. Hourly threatened, hourly alarmed, we hold them still. How long, O Lord! how long? . . . Are your letters, my friend, designedly oracular? Our Provincial Congress meet October 12.

“Let me urge that your responses may graduate with my conceptions. What shall we do?—that is the question. A prevailing discontent, a threatened insurrection, no government except a detested military one; the operations of this distressed community painfully suspended, till we may govern ourselves by your dictates; the most formidable fortifications at the gates nearly completed; trenches formed and cannon planted in the embrasures; provisions stopped, and conveyances of goods of all kinds between Boston and Charlestown; a line of batteries to be erected from the ferry to dictatorial and offensive part, we are compelled with reluctance to scourge the insect, though convinced 't is but an insect still.”

Barton's Point, with pickets; the hill on Dorchester Neck to be fortified; a ditch and drawbridge upon the Neck;—thus are we immediately to be surrounded, and can we be at ease? The apprehending of some individuals is still the burden of the song, and still we laugh at them. The country is very uneasy; long it cannot be restrained. They urge us, and threaten to compel us to desert the town. They swear the troops shall not continue unmolested. Pray direct us what we shall do. The utmost extent of their forbearance is limited to the rising of Congress. The troops here behave insolently. They ridicule and vilify the inhabitants incessantly. They challenge and stop passengers coming into town, and two instances have lately occurred where they have stabbed the horses of persons who would not stop at their bidding.”¹

This letter, while it sketches the condition of Boston and the military operations of Gage, affords a glimpse of that despondency which not long after took possession of Church, and induced him to desert the cause which, barring some backsliding, he had so long and ably sustained. A heartier and more trusty correspondent was John Pitts, a merchant of large wealth, and one of the most useful members of the Committee. He writes to Mr. Adams:—

“The Committee of Correspondence are firm. In your absence there has been, as usual, the improvement of the ready pens of a Warren and Church, the criticism of a Greenleaf, the vigilance and industry of a Molineux, and the united wisdom of those who commonly compose the meeting; but when I have been there, I have sometimes observed the want of one who never failed to animate. After referring you to Mr. Tudor for particulars of our political affairs, I have only to express my ardent wishes for a happy determination of your Congress, after which, that we may see you again, as soon as may be, for, as ‘iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.’”²

The same opinion of the great character of Samuel Adams apparently pervaded all classes of people alike. His

¹ Dr. Benjamin Church to Samuel Adams, Sept. 29, 1774.

² John Pitts to Samuel Adams, Oct. 16, 1774.

judgment was such that, in the stormiest days preceding the outbreak of the war, it was common among the vulgar and uneducated to assert that he was actually gifted with prophecy, and not a few believed that he held peace or war in his keeping. Several curious instances of this superstition have been handed down. In whatever direction we turn, this infallible reliance on his wisdom appears. His fellow-laborers in the cause of freedom went to him for light and guidance in the times of darkest peril; and even the few who had differed with him in policy came to be convinced that his views and deductions were correct, and his advice that of experience and sagacity.¹

The correspondence between Adams and the friends of liberty in England is sometimes at this period anonymous, for obvious reasons. The accounts carried thither by many who arrived from America, and were able to describe him from a personal acquaintance, probably aided to create the general opinion of his great influence. Even Majesty regarded him as the soul of the Revolution, and there was not one of the Ministry but had made him a subject of conversation. Bernard's letters, and particularly those of Hutchinson, raised him as a conspicuous landmark on the American side. King George held an interview with Hutchinson as soon as the ex-Governor could be hurried to the palace on his arrival in London. His Majesty knew that Samuel Adams was poor, and he asked, "What gives him his influence?" to which Hutchinson answered, "A great pretended zeal for liberty, and a most inflexible natural temper. He was the first who asserted the independency of the Colonies upon the supreme authority of the kingdom."² He had already written from Boston that the patriot was above price. In the Southern Colonies, the character of Adams as a statesman was universally respected, though

¹ The letter of Josiah Quincy to his wife on this subject is hereafter given.

² Bancroft, VII 72. Hutchinson, III. xiv. (This is in the Preface contained only in that part of the edition intended for the *English* market.)

some accused him of what the Loyalists repeatedly laid at his door, — the design of revolutionizing the country for selfish purposes ; but this idea prevailed only among those who were totally ignorant of the man. Among the Loyalists in Boston he was still the particular mark for vengeance. As the news of the resolutions indorsing the action of the Suffolk resolves reached Boston, Admiral Montagu wrote : —

“ I see some pretty resolves from Concord, and the proceedings from Philadelphia seem to go on well for a civil war. . . . I doubt not but that I shall hear Mr. Samuel Adams is hanged or shot before many months are at an end. I hope so at least.”¹

Of the many letters written by Adams during his stay in Philadelphia, only two or three are extant. These breathe the same spirit, — advising his countrymen to prepare for war, which, though he did not deem it prudent to assert as much, he even now saw was inevitable. He was too deeply read in human nature to entertain any other belief than that the King and Ministry could not now be diverted from their darling policy of subduing America. To Dr. Young, he says : —

“ I have written to some of our friends to provide themselves without delay with arms and ammunition, to get well instructed in the military art, to embody themselves, and prepare a complete set of rules, that they may be ready in case they are called to defend themselves against the violent attacks of despotism. Surely the law of self-preservation will warrant it in this time of danger and doubtful expectation. One cannot be certain that a distracted minister will yield to the measures taken by Congress, though they should operate the ruin of the national trade, until he shall have made further efforts to lay America, as he imperiously expressed it, ‘ *prostrate at his feet.* ’ ”²

Hutchinson’s statement to the King, already quoted, that Samuel Adams was the first man who asserted the independency of the Colonies, was one which he had often made

¹ Sargent’s Life of André, p. 67.

² Samuel Adams to Dr. Young, Philadelphia, Oct. 17, 1774.

before leaving America.¹ His letters to the Ministry repeatedly assert it, and there can be no doubt as to the sentiments of Adams on this subject after the summer of 1768, up to which time he had desired and expected that the differences with the mother country would be arranged, and the revenue acts totally repealed. But the certainty that military coercion was near, and the evidence of its approach in the preparations at that time for an army and ships of war to be stationed at Boston, brought him to a definite conclusion. He perceived the necessity of a distinct republic in the Western Continent; and though he was then before his time with the idea, he knew how to advance without alarming others by precipitate movements. He endeavored to cultivate the public mind up to a positive hatred of kingcraft and its minions, and was unwearying in his efforts to encourage an independent spirit among the "common people." Bancroft brings forward a strong array of evidence on this subject; and the affidavits of royal spies, now on file in the London State Paper Office, attest the accuracy of the statement, that he was all powerful among the people of Boston, from 1768 forward, in advancing the idea of independence. Among the ship-yards and at public meetings, he reasoned on the subject; and his political essays, prior to the outbreak of hostilities, approach the favorite theme; and although they do not openly advocate it, they are always potent arguments against the slavishness of submitting to arbitrary power, and aim to indoctrinate the people with the spirit to wrestle with tyranny when the appointed hour should come. Judge Sullivan, the personal friend and admirer of Adams, is positive on this point. He says of him in his Biographic Sketch, written a few days after the late Governor's death:—

"There is no doubt among his intimate friends, and, indeed, it is well known to his confidential compatriots, that he was the first

¹ Hutchinson to Lord Dartmouth, Oct. 9, 1773 (*ante*, II. 98—102). Hutchinson's History, III. 134, 264, 265. Hutchinson to Gen. Mackay, Aug. 14, 1771; and to Commodore Hood, July 11, 1770.

man in America who contemplated the idea of a separation of the Colonies from the mother country. He was convinced that the connection could not be continued upon a plan which would secure to the Colonists what was then called the rights of Englishmen. His exertions, therefore, all tended to a separation. By his speeches and Gazette productions, a large majority was procured and maintained in Massachusetts in opposition to the claims of the Ministry.”¹

It seems to have been the general voice of the enemies as well as of the friends of Adams, that he was the earliest, as he was the unceasing, promoter of American independence. Such a mass of concurrent testimony is irresistible. The former used the fact with the Ministry to establish his guilt, and secure his execution for treason; and the latter, after the Revolution, remembered it in evidence of his courage and foresight, and as a token of how richly he merited the gratitude of his countrymen. Not only Governor Hutchinson bears repeated testimony, in his secret letters and in his History, that Samuel Adams was the first who promulgated the idea of independence, but Gordon states it as a well-known fact, that “Mr. Samuel Adams had long since said in small confidential companies, ‘This country shall be independent, and we will be satisfied with nothing short of it.’” This was many years before ordinary minds had seriously considered such a contingency. Others may have speculated even a century before upon the destinies of America and the possible establishment here, in the course of time, of a Western empire; but it was in the brain of Samuel Adams that the idea of a direct and absolute separation from England originated; and he led all other men in America in the active dissemination of that idea, until its eventful accomplishment.

This brings us to the consideration of the question, how

¹ Sullivan's Biographic Sketch in the Boston Independent Chronicle, Oct. 10, 1803. See also Chap. XLII. (June, 1776), where other contemporary evidence is given on this subject.

far he permitted his grand object to become apparent in the present Congress. Ardently as he desired the consummation of his cherished design, he saw that forbearance and patience were yet the qualities for his countrymen to exercise. He knew that a premature conflict in Boston, — the only place where, under the circumstances, it could occur, — would arm the Loyalists with tenfold power, and probably neutralize the sympathy for his native Province which now burned brightly throughout America. It was only after lengthy debate that some of the Southern delegates in Congress had been induced to sign the American Association, and even then the agreement was with difficulty effected by making concessions to South Carolina. As we have seen by the letters of Samuel Adams to his friends in Boston, many of the members were jealous of the hardy and brave New England people, whom they regarded as aiming at a separation; and nothing could in their eyes be more dreadful to contemplate than such a proposition. Caution was especially necessary. Adams, therefore, during the sitting of this Congress, remained silent on the subject of independence. He was possessed of all the patience and enduring fortitude that he so repeatedly enjoined upon his fellow-countrymen, and he could well abide the appointed time. Hence, though the Massachusetts delegates in Congress took but small part in the debates, confining themselves chiefly to committee labors, Adams was well pleased with the proceedings, particularly with the result of the debate on the Declaration of Rights. James Lovell, writing to Josiah Quincy, says:—

“I am informed that a letter was yesterday read in Provincial Congress from Mr. S. Adams, purporting that things went in the Continental Congress, without any motion of our members, as perfectly to his liking as if he were sole director, and that in a very few days, he doubted not, his friends here would receive the most satisfactory intelligence.”¹

¹ Lovell to Quincy, Oct. 28, 1774 (Quincy's *Life of Quincy*, p. 188). Force's *American Archives*, Fourth Series, I. 949.

Very soon after his arrival at Philadelphia, Samuel Adams received encouraging intelligence from his brother-in-law, Andrew Elton Wells, who had settled in Georgia, and with whom he had corresponded for several years on public affairs. At a meeting of a portion of the people of that Province, by deputies from the several parishes, in August of this year, Noble Wimberly Jones, Telfair, Clay, Wells, and others had been appointed a committee to receive subscriptions for the suffering poor of Boston. The same convention, which was held at Savannah, having adopted resolutions concurring with the sister Colonies in every constitutional measure for the redress of American grievances, appointed a general Committee of Correspondence to communicate with the Committees of the other Provinces. Andrew Elton Wells was a member of this body, and it is not unlikely that his usefulness was largely increased by the reflection that he was acting in a cause so dear to his distinguished relative in his native Province.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Return of the Massachusetts Delegates. — Their Reception at Boston. — Adams enters the Provincial Congress. — He urges that Body to prepare for the Last Resort. — The Crisis approaching. — Inflammatory Placards against the Leading Patriots. — The American Question in Parliament. — Chatham urges Conciliation. — The Ministerial Policy prevails. — Petitions of the General Congress rejected. — Massachusetts declared to be in a State of Rebellion. — The King and Parliament pledged to subdue the Colonies. — Character of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. — Suffering in Boston under the Port Act. — Supplies pour in from the other Colonies. — Adams Chairman of the Donation Committee. — His Replies to the Donors. — Plans to seize the Principal Leaders. — Public Anxiety for Adams and Hancock. — Andrew Elton Wells.

ON the 26th of October the Continental Congress closed its session, having appointed a second convention of all the North American Colonies, by their deputies, for the ensuing May. The delegates spent the evening together at the City Tavern, and on the 28th the Massachusetts members took their departure for home "in a very great rain." They returned by the way of New York, where Mr. Paine remained to take the packet to Newport, on his way to Taunton. The other three reached Boston by the post route, and arriving on the evening of the 9th of November, were ushered into the town by the ringing of bells and other demonstrations of joy. The approach of the delegates had been previously announced, and their friends had been all day expecting them. Gordon, whose History shows that he was much impressed with the important part acted by the subject of this biography, says, on closing the account of the Continental Congress: "Mr. S. Adams having seen a happy issue to the important deliberations of the General Congress, after his return, repaired to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress to aid in their deliberations."¹

The letters which Samuel Adams received, while at Philadelphia, had prepared him for the condition of affairs existing on his return. Boston was now, in every respect, the fortress of liberty, and all eyes were turned upon its inhabitants, in whose fortitude and courage the people of America had perfect reliance. The sufferers knew that the other Colonies would ardently support them in the last appeal, and it was their duty to forbear to the utmost, the better to merit the confidence of the rest of the continent; but it was with the greatest difficulty that the rage of the population of the capital and surrounding towns could be restrained. An eye-witness of these events, one well qualified to write of Samuel Adams and his public measures, says: —

“When Mr. Adams returned from Congress, in the fall of this year, he gave but little encouragement that the petition [of the Continental Congress to the King] would be attended to, and therefore he urged the Provincial Congress, by establishing magazines, to be prepared for the last resort. The Parliament could not, consistently with the English Constitution, relinquish its authority over the Colonies; nor could the Colonies, consistently with their rights as freemen, submit to a legislature in whose election they had no suffrage. This was not concealed from Mr. Adams; but an open avowal of his principles and plans would have disconcerted the Whig cause, and destroyed the force of the opposition.”¹

The Governor had issued writs, convening the General Assembly at Salem on the 1st of October; but before that time he dissolved it by proclamation, when the plan which had been agreed upon in such a contingency was carried into effect, and the Representatives, meeting on the appointed day, resolved themselves into a Provincial Congress, which held its first session on the 7th of October at Salem, where, having chosen Hancock their Chairman, and Lincoln Clerk, they adjourned to Cambridge. Of the four delegates to the Continental Congress, Samuel Adams and Cushing had been elected to this Provincial Congress from Boston

¹ Judge Sullivan's Sketch of Samuel Adams, 1803.

during their absence. The Congress, on organizing, appointed a committee to consider the state of the Province, who soon after reported an address to Gage. In this they avowed their attachment to Great Britain, but complained of the acts of Parliament, and the concentration of the military forces at Boston. The Governor replied that he was acting only in self-defence, called the Congress a violation of the charter, and required them to desist from their illegal proceedings. But the Committee on the State of the Province had already arranged their plans, and, at their recommendation, a Committee of Safety was appointed. This was a power springing, like the Committee of Correspondence, directly from the people, and superseding, to a great extent, the functions of that remarkable system.

The Provincial Congress had adjourned before the four delegates reached Boston, and did not meet again until the last week in November. They found the town suffering all the rigors of a blockade, and an insolent soldiery in full possession, insulting the inhabitants, and waiting only the fitting opportunity to imbrue their hands in the blood of its citizens. That the constantly repeated threat to seize the leaders, and transport them to England for trial, was not carried into execution, is to be imputed solely to the Governor's conviction that the attempt would lead to instant hostilities; and of the result of a sudden conflict, those who were not mere braggarts among the officers could have but one opinion, when they knew that thirty thousand men had been in arms on one occasion, and were actually far on their way to attack the troops, supposing the fleet had commenced bombarding the town. But in England there was a less favorable opinion of the strength of the Provincials, and it was doubtless the wish, as well as the expectation, that the "faction," as Bernard and Hutchinson had long termed the patriots, should be crushed out and the injured trade of the country restored. What the Loyalists in Boston hoped for may be inferred by the following letter, which was thrown into the camps of the British troops:—

**"TO THE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S
TROOPS IN BOSTON.**

"It being more than probable that the King's standard will soon be erected from rebellion breaking out in this Province, it's proper that you soldiers should be acquainted with the authors thereof, and of all the misfortunes brought upon the Province. The following is a list of them, viz.: Messrs. Samuel Adams, James Bowdoin, Dr. Thomas Young, Dr. Benjamin Church, Capt. John Bradford, Josiah Quincy, Major Nathaniel Barber, William Molineux, John Hancock, William Cooper, Dr. Chauncy, Dr. Cooper, Thomas Cushing, Joseph Greenleaf, and William Denning. The friends of your King and country and of America hope and expect it from you soldiers, the instant rebellion happens, that you will put the above persons to the sword, destroy their houses, and plunder their effects! It is just that they should be the first victims to the evils they have brought upon us.

"A FRIEND TO GREAT BRITAIN AND AMERICA.

"N. B. — Don't forget those trumpeters of sedition, the printers Edes and Gill, and Thomas." ¹

It is a remarkable fact that this "black list," like that of others of a subsequent date, is headed with the name of the "Chief Incendiary"; and that six of these were of the number who, in the previous winter, had signed the mutual agreement in the Boston Committees of Correspondence, immediately after the destruction of the tea. Almost at the same time, the popular leaders were discussed in England as objects of particular vengeance. "The patriots may make themselves easy," said one, "in regard to the naked poles on Temple Bar, which they have made such a rout about lately, as in all probability they will soon be decorated with some of the patriotic noddles of the Boston saints." ²

¹ Boston Evening Post for Sept. 19, 1774; and New York Gazetteer for Sept. 8, 1774.

² Extract from a London Journal, quoted in the Boston Gazette, Oct. 17, 1774.

Whatever effect this may have had in England, it was very far from intimidating either the objects of these denunciations or the people of America generally. A gentleman of Philadelphia, writing to a member of the British Parliament at the close of the year, says :—

“There cannot be a greater error than to suppose that the present commotions in America are owing to the arts of demagogues. Every man thinks and acts for himself in a country where there is an equal distribution of property and knowledge. It is to no purpose to attempt to destroy the opposition to the omnipotence of Parliament, by taking off our Hancocks, Adamses, and Dickinsons. Ten thousand patriots of the same stamp stand ready to fill their places. Would to Heaven our rulers would consider these things in time; one more rash and unjust action on your side the water may divide us beyond the possibility of a union. For God’s sake, try to rouse up the ancient spirit of the nation; we love you; we honor you as brethren and fellow-subjects; we have shared in your dangers and glories; only grant us the liberty you enjoy, and we shall always remain one people. Let the bond of our union be in the crown of Great Britain.”¹

The Provincial Congress convened again on the 23d of November. Their second resolution on meeting was, “That the gentlemen who were members of the late Continental, and are of this Provincial Congress, be joined to the Committee on the State of the Province”; and on the following day, the chairman of the Continental delegation having reported in brief the proceedings of the body at Philadelphia, their action was soon after endorsed, and the grateful acknowledgments of Massachusetts were tendered to its patriotic members. Another resolution, passed a day or two after, enjoins it upon every member “to give constant attendance, and in case they should be under a necessity of absence, to signify the same to the Congress, in order to their obtaining leave to withdraw.”² The journals prudently omit to state the rea-

¹ Force’s American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 1066.

² Journal of the Provincial Congress, p. 51.

sons for this resolution, but it may be traced in the pages of the historian of the time. Gordon says : —

“When the Provincial Congress met again, having Mr. Samuel Adams present with them, they pushed their preparations for hostile opposition. These exertions suited not the feelings of many in Congress. Through timidity they began to sicken at heart, and upon the plea of sickness, begged leave to return home, and were indulged. Mr. S. Adams penetrated the cause of their complaint, and, in order to stop the epidemical distemper, expressed his great unwillingness that when members were not well, they should be allowed to return, but proposed they should be enjoined, upon getting back, to inform the towns they were no longer represented, so that others might be sent to supply their absence. This proposal soon cured the malady; for the disordered chose to remain in Congress rather than incur the displeasure of their constituents, and be supplanted by new successors.”¹

It has been verbally stated by a member of this Congress, that Samuel Adams repeatedly pressed upon them a more careful attention to the too frequent practice by the British troops of marching into the interior. That if this was allowed, the people would gradually become familiar with military parade, which, becoming less a matter of note, would lull to rest the popular vigilance. He recommended that they should be forcibly prevented from penetrating, at any time, into the heart of the Province. This he said on several public occasions and in this Congress; he urged that if the troops marched out with their baggage they should be opposed, and in no case suffered to go more than ten miles into the country. But however appalled some of the members may have been at the terrible crisis which they saw was inevitable, it needed no oratory nor powers of persuasion to keep that body of devoted men firm in the great cause. The tone of the reports and addresses emanating from them evinces a pure and self-sacrificing patriotism, which no terrors could subdue. There may have been, there undoubtedly were,

¹ Gordon's American Revolution, I. 416. Bancroft, VII. 182.

as in all public bodies, vacillating or timid characters, who were led by the more resolute. All history shows that deliberating assemblies, as well as great public movements, have their guiding spirits; but probably no convention exercising powers of government was ever more unanimous, and certainly none ever acted with a deeper moral conviction of the right and justice of their cause. This Congress included the most eminent men for wealth and character in Massachusetts. Besides Samuel Adams, it numbered among its members Hancock, Joseph and James Warren, John Adams, Hawley, Cushing, Paine, Gerry, Church, Appleton, Lincoln, Pickering, Winthrop, Gardner, Dana, Prescott, Bowers, and Ward, all distinguished in the popular cause, and some of them its supporters in debate, with the pen, and with the sword. Many other members could be mentioned, whose career had been confined to their particular locality, for each of whom might have been prepared a biography of rare interest connected with the stirring events of their day; but time has swept all but their names into oblivion.

The town of Boston now deemed it proper to take some action upon the resolutions of the late Continental Congress for the observance of their non-importation agreement; and at a meeting at Faneuil Hall on the 7th of December, Samuel Adams being moderator, a large committee was appointed, with Adams as chairman, to carry those resolves into effect. These names included the principal citizens in Boston, any seven of whom should be a quorum.¹ At the same meeting, Adams, Church, and Warren were made a committee to report, at the adjournment, an answer to Gage's reply to the letter of Peyton Randolph, during the sitting of the late Continental Congress.² The letter referred to had been prepared in Congress by a committee consisting of Lynch, Samuel Adams, and Pendleton; and as it related particularly to the fortifications then erecting around Boston, it is probable that

¹ Boston Town Records for December, 1774.

² Journal of the First Continental Congress, p. 25.

Adams, as the only representative of Massachusetts on the committee, had been selected to draft it. The reply of Gage to this letter was now considered as containing "divers gross mistakes to the prejudice of the town." The answer to it by the committee was reported on the 30th, and unanimously adopted. It takes up the assertions of Gage in detail, and completely exposes their falsity. The numerous outrages perpetrated under a military government are enumerated with feeling and eloquence.¹ The seizure of the Colony's powder; the dispersal of the Assembly; the erection of fortifications on Boston Common and the Neck; the violent appropriation of arms belonging to private persons; the pointing of cannon against the town; the refusal to allow citizens to cross the ferry to Charlestown after eight o'clock in the evening; the stopping and detaining of persons in vehicles; the beating and confining others, and stabbing of their horses, and like abuses,—are plainly set forth, and present a powerful array of facts against a tyrannical government. The report having been accepted, the chairman was desired by the meeting to transmit a copy to Peyton Randolph. Then, having adopted resolutions acknowledging the generous donations from the other Colonies, the town made choice of Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Joseph Warren, Benjamin Church, Oliver Wendell, and John Pitts as delegates to the second Provincial Congress, to be held at Cambridge on the 1st of the ensuing February.

The new year opened with gloomy prospects. The poor of Boston, brought to the verge of starvation by the cruel blocking up of their port, were yet preserved from perishing by the continued donations from the neighboring towns and the other Colonies, though these gifts had generally to be brought in by tedious, circuitous routes over land, as no loaded boat was allowed to move in any part of the harbor. Samuel Adams wrote to Arthur Lee that the infamous act

¹ Boston Town Records for December, 1774. Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 1077—1079.

was enforced with a rigor beyond the intention of its framers ; but the royal officers replied, when taxed with their heartlessness, that they were not disposed to abate in the severity of the law. Not content with a malignant exercise of the arbitrary power placed in their hands, the government officers and Loyalists exerted themselves to destroy public confidence in the Donation Committee, by circulating falsehoods respecting their disposal of the moneys entrusted to them. This was done so industriously, that the Committee at length found it necessary to repel the charge in a circular, signed by Samuel Adams as chairman, publicly contradicting the slanderous reports, "that each member of the Committee was allowed six shillings, and some said half a guinea, for every day's attendance." The Committee declared the report to be groundless, and said "that they had attended and acted in their office, and would continue to do so, without any intention, hope, or desire of receiving any other reward in this life but the pleasure which results from a consciousness of having done good. So satisfied are they of their own *disinterested* motives and conduct in this regard, that they can safely appeal to the Omniscient Being for their sincerity in this their declaration." Other equally scandalous accusations are refuted ; the public are invited to examine their carefully kept books, containing records of the whole of their proceedings ; and the Committee challenge any person whatever to make it appear that there is any just foundation for such reports. "Until this reasonable demand is complied with, they confide in the justice of the public, that no credit will be given to reports so injurious to the Committee and to this oppressed and insulted people."

The infamous attacks must have been widely and actively circulated to require so emphatic a denial ; but it was necessary to use every effort to prevent a discontinuance of the donations through the falsehood of unscrupulous Tories. A northern winter was upon the country, and fuel was scarce and difficult to obtain upon any terms ; but the people

stubbornly bore their hardships and calmly awaited the issue.

The British officers affected to despise the rustic bands who were drilling in every county,¹ but the Provincials, as they viewed the construction of the works on the Neck, held them equally in contempt, and compared them derisively with the fortifications they had faced at Louisburg fifteen years before. No thinking man now doubted that a conflict was near. The seizure of the public stores and the words of bitter hate which were constantly passing between the soldiers and the inhabitants it was seen could be only the short forerunners of bloody work. Many of the British troops continued to desert, despite the watchfulness of their officers and the rewards offered for their apprehension. Adams, in one of his letters, thus alluded to the condition of the town and the soldiery:—

“From the beginning of this great contest, I have seen Virginia distinguishing herself in the support of American liberty; and in the liberal donations received from all parts of that Colony for the sufferers in this town, we have had abundant testimonies of their unanimity and zeal for that all-important cause. I have the pleasure to assure you that the people of this Colony (saving a few detestable men, most of whom are in this town) are also firm and united. General Gage is still here with eleven regiments, besides several detachments, yet it is generally supposed that there are not more than two thousand five hundred effective men in all. They have

¹ This idea of superiority over the rustic populations of America was not confined to the British soldiers. Curwen, after his flight to England, though an inveterate Tory, thus refers in his Diary (Dec. 18, 1776) to the opinion entertained in England of Americans: “It is my earnest wish the despised Americans may convince these conceited islanders that, without regular standing armies, our continent can furnish brave soldiers and judicious and expert commanders, by some knock-down, irrefragible argument, for then, and not till then, may we expect generous or fair treatment. It piques my pride, I confess, to hear us called ‘*our Colonies, our Plantations*,’ in such terms, and with such airs, as if our property and persons were absolutely theirs, like the ‘villains’ and their cottages in the old feudal system so long since abolished, though the spirit or leaven is not totally gone, it seems.”

been very sickly through the winter past, many have died, and many others have deserted. I have seen a joint list, and I believe it to be a true one, of the Royal Irish and the detachments from the Sixty-Fifth, in which the whole number was one hundred and sixty-seven, and only one hundred and two of them effective. But though the number of the troops are diminished, the insolence of the officers (at least some of them) has increased. In private rencontres I have not heard of a single instance of their coming off other than second best.”¹

The American question was brought forward in January in the House of Lords, when the Earl of Chatham resumed his seat, after a long retirement, and, in the presence of many Americans, who watched the momentous passing events with the most intense interest, exerted all the energy of his declining years in the cause of British freedom, now trodden under foot in America. His venerable appearance and great renown attracted all eyes, and the greatness of the occasion called forth his most glowing eloquence. He urged the repeal of the acts, pronounced a grand panegyric on the late Continental Congress, whose solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of difficult circumstances no nation or body of men could, in his opinion, excel. To attempt to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation, must be vain and futile.

“But it is not merely repealing these acts,” said he, “that can win back America to your bosom. You must repeal her fears and resentments, and you may then hope for her love and gratitude. Now, insulted with an armed force, irritated with a hostile array before her eyes, which is a bar to all confidence and cordial reconciliation, her concessions, even if you could force them, would be suspicious and insincere. We shall be forced ultimately to retract; let us retract while we can, not when we must. Whoever advises the enforcement of these acts must do so at his peril. They must be repealed; you will repeal them; I pledge myself for it, that you

¹ Samuel Adams to Richard Henry Lee, March 21, 1775.

will, in the end, repeal them. I stake my reputation on it. I will consent to be taken for an idiot, if they are not finally repealed. There is no time to be lost. Every moment is big with danger. Nay, while I am now speaking, the decisive blow may be struck, and millions involved in the consequence. The very first drop of blood will make a wound that will not easily be skinned over. Years, perhaps ages, may not heal it. It will be *irritabile vulnus*, — a wound of that rancorous, malignant, corroding, festering nature, that in all probability it will mortify the whole body. Repeal, therefore, my Lords! *repeal*, I say! Thus will you convince America that you mean to try her cause in the spirit and by the laws of freedom and fair inquiry, and not by the code of blood. How can she trust you with the bayonet at her breast? She has all the reason in the world to believe that you mean her death or bondage. Avoid, then, this humiliating, disgraceful necessity. To conclude, if the ministers thus persevere in misadvising the King, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from the Crown; but I will affirm that, the American jewel out of it, they will make the Crown not worth his wearing: I will not say that the King is betrayed; but I will say that the nation is ruined.”¹

With such spirited and almost inspired eloquence did this illustrious man plead the cause of America, and predict with prophetic foresight the disastrous consequences of a persistence in the present policy. At the same time he moved an address to the King for the removal of the troops from Boston, in order to open a way to reconciliation. The Marquis of Rockingham and Lords Shelburne and Camden supported the motion, but the majority of peers defeated it. The same spirit was evinced in the House of Commons, where the memorial from the Continental Congress, presented by Franklin, Lee, and Bollan, was rejected. Lord Chatham, indulging some lingering hopes of conciliation, introduced, after a consultation with Franklin, a bill “for

¹ Barry's Massachusetts, II. 502. A fuller report of this speech may be found in Gordon's History, I. 298–302; and still another report in Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 1494–1498.

settling the troubles in America, and for asserting the supreme legislative authority and superintending power of Great Britain over America"; but the project met with no better success.¹ A joint address to the King, declaring Massachusetts in a state of rebellion, was voted on the 9th of February, beseeching his Majesty to pursue the most effectual measures for assuring due obedience to the laws, and solemnly pledging their lives and fortunes to maintain the just rights of the Crown and of the two Houses of Parliament. Lord North immediately followed with a bill for restraining the commerce of several of the Colonies, and prohibiting their fisheries on the banks of Newfoundland. Numerous and powerful petitions were presented against this cruel measure from many sources, and, while it was pending, the same nobleman procured the passage of a "conciliatory proposition," so called, by which he attempted to disunite the Colonies by offering to forbear to tax any Province which would contribute a sum satisfactory to his Majesty for the common defence. This plan conceded nothing, and only exhibited the hesitancy of the minister in the prosecution of his measures. The Americans were to be driven into slavery at the cannon's mouth. The King replied to the joint address on the 10th of February, pledging himself to "the most speedy and effectual measures for enforcing due obedience to the laws and the authority of the supreme Legislature." Additional plans were entertained by Chatham and Burke from this time, until after blood had flowed at Lexington; but the last hope had in reality vanished with the solemn interchange of pledges between King and Parliament to appeal to the sword.

The second Provincial Congress convened at Cambridge on the 1st of February, and elected Hancock President, and Lincoln Secretary. Immediately on the organization, Hancock, Hawley, Adams, Warren, Paine, Pitts, Holton, Heath,

¹ Grahame's History, under date Feb. 1, 1775. Parliamentary Debates in Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 1504 - 1515.

Gerrish, Cushing, Ward, and Gardner were appointed a Committee on the State of the Province,¹ whose duties were constant and arduous, relating to financial matters and general detail, and requiring close attention. This Congress now assumed and exercised all legislative power in Massachusetts. They had completely superseded the old General Court, and their resolutions were considered as in all respects binding. The particular part taken by Samuel Adams in this session can only be inferred from the frequent occurrence of his name in the pages of its journals, and the letters which at this time appear to be written in odd minutes snatched from the pressing demands of committee business, where all were busily engaged in the organization and conduct of a new government, whose aim it was to place the Province in a condition for war, and manage the strange and unprecedented events hurrying fast upon each other. Adams must have been as usual active and indefatigable. The members were placed under pledge of honor not to divulge the debates, and their subjects are thus left to conjecture. The body itself was the most remarkable in some respects that had yet convened in America. As their name signified, they were Provincial in character, compared with the general Congress which had assembled at Philadelphia; but though the last named body was composed of the principal gentlemen of every Colony, and was the collected wisdom of a continent, it might be said that their deliberations were entirely upon occurrences happening at Boston. The Provincial Congress met on the same business, in the very Province against which the vengeance of Britain was directed. The Continental Congress had long hesitated to adopt even the non-importation and non-consumption agreements, but the assemblage at Cambridge had ceased petitioning, and having assumed the forms and acts of supreme local power, had already set in motion new wheels of government, and was, to all intents and purposes, the Legis-

¹ Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 84.

lature of a people wholly separated from Great Britain. Officers holding their appointments under the Crown took no part in their deliberations, and even the Governor was treated with as the agent of a foreign nation. No titled personage, no scion of nobility, occupied any position among them. They were a body of Provincial statesmen, mostly untutored in the arts of diplomacy, but not surpassed in any civilized society in the world for intelligence and devotion to the rights of mankind. Courage, determination, sagacity, piety, and all the qualities which compose true greatness in men, were there; and time has proved the consummate wisdom of all their measures.

Among the earliest proceedings of this body was the election of Hancock, Cushing, Samuel and John Adams, and Robert Treat Paine, as delegates to the second Continental Congress to meet in May at Philadelphia; and the sum of one hundred pounds sterling was directed to be paid to each of them by Henry Gardner, the Treasurer of the Province, to defray their expenses in that service.¹ They would not depart for Philadelphia until May, and, in the interim, great events were to happen. The approach of bloodshed grew every day more imminent. During this month, the King's speech of March in the previous year, and the answering addresses of the two Houses of Parliament, had been published in Boston. Even these documents revealed a determination to put an immediate stop to the disorders, and secure the

¹ Journals of the Provincial Congress, pp. 86—95. In explanation of the continual use of the name of "Mr. Adams" as a member of committees during the session of this second Provincial Congress, it should be stated that John Adams was not a member, though he had been added to the list of deputies from his native town to the first Congress sitting at Cambridge in November, 1774, and with Paine was summoned to appear as speedily as possible to make up the Continental delegation, whose presence was desirable. The name of John Adams does not occur in the roll of members of the present assemblage; and there is a blank in his Diary all through this period, showing that he had no hand in the proceedings. Samuel Adams was a member of both the first and second Provincial Congress, and an acting member of the Committee of Safety.

dependence of the Colonies upon the Crown and Parliament. The later addresses had not yet reached America. The power of Britain was at last to be launched against the refractory Colonists, some of whom had already been designated as the objects of royal displeasure. At the head of the marked list stood the name of Samuel Adams.

Surrounded with the securities of society and a protecting government, it is difficult now to go back, even in imagination, and depict the vague terrors which at that time must generally have attached to the idea of a separation of the Colonies from the parent country. Multitudes, indeed, supported by the consciousness of a righteous cause, and the knowledge that there was still some public sentiment in their favor in England, and that great and good men were battling for them in the national councils, looked upon reconciliation as by no means hopeless, or felt nerved to brave the threatened shock. But, on the other hand, there was a large class who brooded with doleful misgivings over the probable result, and would fain have yielded up American principles for the peace and security which obedience would have ensured. The Loyalists, numerous and powerful, lost no opportunity to throw discredit upon the popular movements. Some pursued this course from a sincere conviction that the opposition to Parliament was founded in error, and instigated, as the government writers took care to assert, by needy malcontents. Others, under the firm belief that patriotism must eventually be crushed out by the irresistible power of England, adopted what appeared to be the strongest side, and remained loyal with the hope of future preferment. Many were attached to either side by interest, family connections, fear, or example, without fully comprehending the principles at stake. That prestige, always attending existing power in whatever form, was now wielded with peculiar force by the Loyalists, who united the consciousness of government favor to the confident demeanor often accompanying an association with titled or official dignitaries. Fashion,

wealth, and an assumed social superiority had their influence. Persuasion, able writing, bribes, and threats were all used, and strong loyal associations were formed; and over all the dread power of Britain was held with menacing aspect. Gage had been censured for his inactivity, and was urged to take the offensive. But though an ignominious death seemed to be ever hovering about the leaders, they were not intimidated. One of the methods used to demoralize public sentiment was the posting of placards about the town by the Loyalists, denouncing the principal men in the popular cause. The following is a specimen:—

“FRIENDS, COUNTRYMEN, AND CITIZENS:—

“Have you read and weighed his Majesty’s speech?—the address of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain? I fear we have got into the wrong box! Therefore let us not any longer be led by frenzy, but seize upon and deliver up to justice at once those who have seduced us from our duty and happiness, or, depend upon it, they will leave us in the lurch! nay, I am assured some of them, who had property, have already mortgaged all their substance, for fear of confiscation; but that shall not save their necks, for I am one (of forty misled people) who will watch their motion, and not suffer them to escape the punishment due to the disturbers of our repose. Remember the fate of Wat Tyler; and think how vain it is for Jack, Sam, or Will¹ to war against Great Britain, now she is in earnest! It is greatly inferior to the giants waging war against Olympus. These had strength, but what have we? Our leaders are desperate bankrupts. Our country is without money, stores, or necessities of war; without one place of refuge or defence! If we were called together, we should be a confused herd, without any disposition to obedience, without a general of ability to direct and guide us; and our numbers would be our destruction! Never did a people rebel with so little reason; therefore our conduct cannot be justified before God. Never did so weak a people dare to contend with so powerful a state; therefore it cannot be justified by prudence. It is all the consequence of the arts of crafty knaves

¹ Supposed to refer to Hancock, Adams, and Cooper.

over weak minds and wild enthusiasts, who, if we continue to follow, will lead us to inevitable ruin.

"Rouse, rouse, ye Massachusetians, while it be yet time! Ask pardon of God, submit to your King and Parliament, whom we have wickedly and grievously offended. Eyes had we, but saw not; neither have we heard with our ears. Let not our posterity curse us for having wantonly lost the estates that should have been theirs, or for entailing misery upon them, by implicitly adhering to the promises of a few desperadoes. Let us seize our seducers, make peace with our mother country, and save ourselves and children. Amen!

"A YEOMAN OF SUFFOLK COUNTY.

"BOSTON, Sabbath Eve, Feb. 5, 1775."¹

The Donation Committee for the distribution of the supplies sent for the relief of Boston continued actively engaged in its good work, and Samuel Adams remained its chairman. On his return from Philadelphia, he resumed his post, and we find him among the most industrious in responding to the many acts of charity. On receiving a gift of flour from New York, he replies to the committee in that Colony:—

"While we acknowledge the superintendency of Divine Providence, we feel our obligations to the sister Colonies. By their liberality they have greatly chagrined the common enemies of America, who flattered themselves with hopes that, before this day, they should starve us into a compliance with the insolent demands of despotic power. But the people, relieved by your charitable contributions, bear the indignity with becoming patience and fortitude. They are not insensible of the injuries done them as men, as well as free Americans, but they restrain their just resentment from a due regard to the common cause."

George Reed, afterwards a signer of the Declaration of Independence, in the Delaware delegation, sent, in connection with Mr. Van Dyke, upwards of nine hundred dollars.

¹ Handbill distributed through Boston on Monday, February 6, 1775 (Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 1216).

Mr. Adams, deputed by the Donation Committee to acknowledge the gift, says in reply : —

“They have directed me to request that you would return their sincere thanks to the people of New Castle County for their great liberality towards their fellow-subjects in this place, who are still under the hand of oppression and tyranny. It will, I dare say, afford you abundant satisfaction to be informed that the inhabitants of this town, with the exception only of a contemptible few, appear to be animated with an inextinguishable love of liberty. Having the approbation of all the sister Colonies, and being thus supported by their generous benefactions, they endure the most severe trials with a manly fortitude, which disappoints and perplexes our common enemies. While a great continent is thus anxious for them, and constantly administering to their relief, they can even smile with contempt on the feeble efforts of the British administration to force them to submit to tyranny, by depriving them of the usual means of subsistence. The people of this Province behold with indignation a lawless army posted in its capital, with a professed design to overturn their free Constitution. They restrain their just indignation, in hopes that the most happy effects will flow from the united applications of the Colonies for their relief.”¹

The Union Fire Club at Salem sent forty pounds in cash, and Adams writes in acknowledgment : —

“It is an unspeakable consolation to the inhabitants of this devoted town that, amidst the distress designed to have been brought upon them by an inhuman as well as arbitrary minister, there are many whose hands and hearts are open for their relief. You, gentlemen, are among the happy number of those of whom it is said, the blessing of him that is ready to perish hath come upon us, and through your liberality the widow’s heart [is made] to sing for joy.

“Our friends have enabled us to bear up under oppression to the astonishment of our enemies. May Heaven reward our kind benefactors tenfold; and grant to us wisdom and fortitude that, during this hard conflict, we may behave as becomes those who are called to struggle in so glorious a cause, and by our patience and perse-

¹ This letter, in the autograph of Samuel Adams, is still preserved among the papers of George Reed.

verance at length frustrate the designs of our country's inveterate foes."

A donation was made by Amelia and Dinwiddie in Virginia, directed to Samuel and John Adams, and the former, in acknowledging the gift, says : —

"Thus united and resolved to aid each other, may not the Colonies indulge a prospect that, under the influence of Divine Providence, the plans of a corrupt and infatuated British administration to enslave them will soon be defeated? and that the restoration and establishment of the liberties of America may be the happy fruits of all our sufferings, is the ardent wish of the Committee, in whose behalf

"I subscribe, &c."

Richard Randolph of Henrico County, Virginia, sent a large shipment of corn and grain from gentlemen in that vicinity, and Adams, at the request of the Committee returned their thanks.

"The Colony of Virginia made an early stand by their ever-memorable resolves, in 1765, against the efforts of a corrupt British administration to enslave America, and has ever distinguished herself by her exertions in support of our common rights. The sister Colonies struggled separately, but the Minister himself has at length united them, and they have lately uttered language that will be heard. It is the fate of this town to drink deep of the cup of ministerial vengeance; but while America bears them witness that they suffer in *her* cause, they glory in their sufferings. Being thus supported by *her* liberality, they will never ungratefully betray her rights. Inheriting the spirit of their virtuous ancestors, they will, after their example, endure hardships, and confide in an all-gracious Providence. Having been born to be free, they will never disgrace themselves by a mean submission to the injurious terms of slavery. These, sir, I verily believe to be the sentiments of our inhabitants; and, if I am not mistaken, such assistances are to be expected from them as, you assure us, are most sincerely and unanimously wished by every Virginian."

In reply to the donations of corn, wheat, and bread from

Spottsylvania, Virginia, forwarded by Charles Dick, Charles Washington, and George Thornton, Adams says : —

“I trust in God that this much injured Colony, when urged to it by extreme necessity, will exert itself at the utmost hazard in the defence of our common rights. I flatter myself that I am not mistaken, while they deprecate that necessity, they are very active in preparing for it.”

From Westmoreland County, Virginia, John Augustine Washington sent more than a thousand bushels of grain furnished by that county.

“Your candid opinion,” replies Samuel Adams, “of the inhabitants of this town, as having some share in defending the common rights of British America, cannot but be very flattering to them, and it will excite in them a laudable ambition by their future conduct to merit the continuance of it. They are unjustly oppressed, but, by the smiles of Heaven and the united friendship and support of all North America, the designs of our enemies to oblige them to make base compliances, to the injury of our common cause, have been hitherto frustrated. They bear repeated insults of the grossest kind, not from want of the feelings of just resentment, or spirit enough to make ample returns, but from principles of sound policy and reason. Put your enemy in the wrong, and keep him so, is a wise maxim in politics as well as in war. They consider themselves as connected with a great continent, deeply interested in their patient sufferings. They had rather, therefore, forego the gratification of revenging affronts and indignities, than prejudice that all-important cause, which they have so much at heart, by precipitating a crisis. When they are pushed by clear necessity for the defence of their liberties to the trial of arms, I trust in God they will convince their friends and their enemies of their military skill and valor. Their constant prayer to God is, to prevent such necessity, but they are daily preparing for it. I rejoice with you, sir, in most earnestly wishing for the speedy and full restoration of the rights of America, which are violated with so high and arbitrary a hand, and am, in behalf of the Committee, with great respect,

“Your obliged and affectionate friend and countryman,

“SAMUEL ADAMS.”¹

¹ Extracts from letters of Samuel Adams for the Donation Committee of

Such is the tone of Adams's letters from the Committee to Boston's benefactors. They breathe a spirit of courage and devotion, and a firm reliance upon the willingness of the New-Englanders to meet whatever issue might be forced upon them. Adams had long since resigned all hope of conciliation. He knew that the Americans had either to submit unconditionally or to fight, and it was with him only a question of time when the struggle should commence. But he still observed his favorite maxim, "Keep your enemy in the wrong." By remaining on the defensive, the conflict must be opened by the royal troops, and the sympathies of the Southern Colonies be increased and insured. In every one of his committee letters to the other Colonies, Adams is particular to impress it upon them, that Boston was suffering in the common cause, and that the patience and fortitude of its inhabitants was based upon the encouragement extended from the rest of America.

"Call me an enthusiast," said he, "this union among the Colonies and warmth of affection can be attributed to nothing less than the agency of the Supreme Being. If we believe that He superintends and directs the affairs of empires, we have reason to expect the restoration and establishment of the public liberties."¹

The next day after the King's address to Parliament, pledging himself to enforce obedience from the Americans, a gentleman in London writing to his correspondent in the Colonies, says:—

"But now you are to be left to your own prudence: your own wisdom will tell you no longer to depend upon England to help you. I had twenty gentlemen this day called on me, and all say, pray write to your friends to declare those rebels who will not fight for their country; for there is gone down to Sheerness seventy-eight thousand guns and bayonets to be sent to America, to be put into the hands of the negroes, the Roman Catholics, and the Cana-

Boston to various contributors (Mass. Hist. Society's Collections, Fourth Series, IV. 165, 168, 174, 185, 211, 239).

¹ Bancroft, VII. 251, 252.

dians, and all the wicked means on earth used to subdue the Colonies. I don't write this to alarm you, but you must not any longer be deceived. Orders have now gone out to take up Mr. Hancock, Adams, Williams, Otis, and six of the head men of Boston. I have now a copy of the proceedings before me. My heart aches for Mr. Hancock. Send off expresses immediately that they intend to seize his estate, and have his fine house for General * * * * *,"¹

Another friend of America had already written from London : —

"From unquestionable authority I learn that, about a fortnight ago, despatches were sent from hence by a sloop of war to General Gage, containing, among other things, a royal proclamation, declaring the inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay, and some others in the different Colonies, actual rebels, with a blank commission to try and execute such of them as he can get hold of. With this is sent a list of names to be inserted in the commission, as he may judge expedient. I do not know them all ; but Messrs. Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, and John Hancock, of Massachusetts Bay, John Dickinson of Philadelphia, Peyton Randolph of Virginia, and Henry Middleton of South Carolina, are particularly named, with many others. This black-list the General will no doubt keep to himself, and unfold it gradually as he finds it convenient.

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"Last Friday night, the 27th instant, in a Privy Council, the American measures were all settled by the Ministry. Part of them is, to pass an act of Parliament inflicting pains and penalties on particular persons and Provinces in America, to countenance the infamous proclamation and commission already sent to General Gage."²

Still another writes from London : —

"It is current here, that orders are sent from hence to seize upon

¹ Letters dated London, Feb. 10, 1775 (Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, I. 1224).

² Letter from a gentleman in London to a friend in New York, Jan. 30, 1775 (*Ibid.*, col. 1202).

particular persons. A prudent caution, therefore, is necessary, for in fact we are in a state of warfare.”¹

An English newspaper, reflecting the general impression as to the seizure and execution of the popular leaders, says:—

“The fate of the members of the American rebellion has been more than once violently agitated in the Privy Council; but the dice at last are thrown; and the following of the Continental Congress are destined to the *cord*,—Hancock, Adams, and Franklin. The remainder of this truly honorable Assembly are to be banished his Majesty’s British and American dominions.”²

The intimate friends of Adams and Hancock urged them repeatedly to retire from Boston into the country at this time; and at their solicitations the family of Adams, at a later period, removed to Cambridge, where the Provincial Congress was sitting. Here they remained at the house of Francis Wells, the father-in-law of Samuel Adams. Very soon after this, the Congress adjourned to meet at Concord.

The oldest son, Andrew Elton Wells, was meantime in Georgia, and proved one of the sturdiest supporters of American rights in a Colony where only a small portion of the people were with the patriots. His letters to Samuel Adams, most of which have unfortunately been destroyed, were filled with intelligence of the general sentiment there, and portrayed the difficulties which the New England settlers were obliged to encounter among the violent Loyalists. After the last summer’s convention at Savannah, where, as one of the county deputies, he had endorsed the action of the Continental Congress in a series of resolutions, curiously resembling those of Samuel Adams in the Massachusetts Legislature of 1765 and 1769, defining the common rights of Englishmen, Mr. Wells became a resident of Savannah, and was the proprietor of a warehouse and wharf

¹ Letter from London, dated Feb. 10, 1775 (*Ibid.*, col. 1224).

² From a London newspaper of February, 1775.

a short distance below the town. A quantity of sugar stored there was seized by the royal authorities, on the refusal of the owner to pay the customary duties. On the night of the 15th of February, an armed party disguised, with their faces smutted, attacked the wharf, threw the guard of seamen into the river, tarred and feathered the tide-waiter, and carried off the hogsheads of sugar. It was thought that one of the guard was drowned. Sir James Wright offered a reward of fifty pounds for the detection of any of the rioters, and pardon to those who would turn state's evidence; but the most careful search failed to elicit any facts, and the property never again fell into government hands. Andrew Elton Wells is said to have been the originator of this "sugar party," as his brother always named it. He was also instrumental in forwarding supplies to the relief of Boston during the summer of 1775, being a member of the Savannah Donation Committee. In July of this year, Wells was one of the three Representatives from the district of Vernonburgh to the Provincial Congress of Georgia, which met at Savannah. The strong royalist influence in that Province had hitherto defeated the object of the patriots, and some of the delegates to this Congress refused to take their seats. Such was the case with one of the colleagues of Wells. The Convention, however, now representing the Province more generally, adopted all the measures of the Continental Congress, and approved of the Declaration of Rights. In 1808, the widow of Samuel Adams bequeathed a portion of her estate to the children of her late brother, who were residing in Burke County, Georgia.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Provincial Congress warns the Militia to be in Readiness for Service. — Adams predicts the Nearness of American Independence. — Adams and Warren dispatch a Secret Agent to Canada. — His Observations at Montreal. — Result of the Mission. — Warren pronounces the Annual Oration. — Scenes in the Old South. — Committee on the State of the Province. — They propose an Armed Confederation of the New England Colonies for Mutual Defence. — Deputies sent to Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. — The Alliance consummated.

DURING this session of the Provincial Congress, Samuel Adams was chairman of a committee appointed for the purpose of warning the people of the imminent danger they were in from the hostile disposition of Great Britain, that there was reason to fear their sudden destruction would be soon attempted, and to urge upon them the importance of preparing for the event. The resolutions to that effect were reported on the same day, and were ordered to be printed in the newspapers.

“Whereas it appears to this Congress, from the present disposition of the British Ministry and Parliament, that there is real cause to fear that the most reasonable and just applications of this continent to Great Britain, for ‘peace, liberty, and safety,’ will not meet with a favorable reception; but, on the contrary, from the large reinforcement of troops expected in this Colony, the tenor of intelligence from Great Britain, and general appearances, we have reason to apprehend that the sudden destruction of this Colony in particular is intended, merely for refusing, with the other American Colonies, tamely to submit to the most ignominious slavery;

“Therefore *Resolved*, That the great law of self-preservation calls upon the inhabitants of this Colony immediately to prepare against every attempt that may be made to attack them by surprise; and it is, upon serious deliberation, most earnestly recommended to the militia in general, as well as the detached part of it in minute-men,

that they spare neither time, pains, nor expense at so critical a juncture, in perfecting themselves forthwith in military discipline, and that skilful instructors be provided for those companies which may not already be provided therewith. And it is recommended to the towns and districts in this Colony, that they encourage such persons as are skilled in the manufacturing of fire-arms and bayonets, diligently to apply themselves thereto, for supplying such of the inhabitants as may still be deficient.

“And for the encouragement of American manufacturers of fire-arms and bayonets, it is further *Resolved*, That this Congress will give the preference to, and purchase from them so many effective arms and bayonets as can be delivered in a reasonable time, upon notice given to this Congress at its next session.”¹

It had long been the wish of Adams to encourage American manufactures, and to have his countrymen perfect themselves in military exercises. Such is the tenor of many of his previous letters, and he had introduced resolutions to that effect in the Assembly. The next day, he wrote to Arthur Lee from Cambridge : —

“The sudden dissolution of the late Parliament was a measure which I expected would take place. I must needs allow that the Ministry have acted a politic part; for if they had suffered the election to be put off till the spring, it might have cost some of them their heads. The new Parliament can with a very ill grace impeach them for their conduct, after having so explicitly avowed it. The thunder of the late speech, and the servile answers, I view as designed to serve the purposes of saving some men from the block. I cannot conclude that Lord North is upon the retreat, though there seems so be some appearance of it. A deception of this kind would prove fatal to us.

“Our safety depends upon our being in readiness for the extreme event. Of this the people here are thoroughly sensible, and from the preparations they are making, I trust in God they will defend their liberties with dignity. If the Ministry have not abandoned themselves to folly and madness, the firm union of the Colonies must be an important objection. The claims of the Colonies are

¹ Journals of the Provincial Congress, pp. 102, 103.

consistent [obliterated] as necessary to their own existence as free subjects, and they will never recede from them. The tools of power here are incessantly endeavoring to divide them, but in vain. I wish the King's Ministers would duly consider what appears to me a very momentous truth, that one regular attempt to subdue those in any other Colony, whatever may be the first issue of the attempt, will open a quarrel which will never be closed, till what some of *them* affect to apprehend, and we sincerely deprecate, will take effect. Is it not, then, high time that they should hearken, not to the clamors of passionate and interested men, but to the cool voice of impartial reason? No sensible minister will think that millions of free subjects, strengthened by such an union, will submit to be slaves. No honest minister would wish to see humanity thus disgraced.

"My attention on the Provincial Congress now sitting here will not admit of my enlarging at present.

"I will write you again by the next opportunity, and, till I have reason to suspect our adversaries have got some of my letters in their possession, I yet venture to subscribe,

"Yours affectionately,

"S. ADAMS.¹

"ARTHUR LEE, Esq."

A part of the business which so engaged the "attention" of Adams on this day is indicated by a resolution, empowering the Boston Committee of Correspondence to establish "an intimate correspondence with the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec," and to carry the plan into immediate execution.² In the previous Congress, in November, he had been one of a committee for a similar purpose, but the subject was postponed until the present session. There exists in the handwriting of Samuel Adams the draft of a letter from the Committee of Correspondence "to gentlemen who are friends of liberty in Montreal and Quebec." He often discussed the subject of Canada with Warren, and they twice despatched secret agents thither to make obser-

¹ Adams to Lee, Feb. 14, 1775.

² Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 100.

vations for future use. In England, the connection of Adams with plans for the reduction of Canada was well known, and he was supposed to be the originator of the schemes for that purpose. The letter of the Committee explains the circumstances and cause of the dispute between England and America, and the certainty that the recent acts of Parliament are not alone intended to enslave one part of the continent, but the whole of British America. It congratulates the people of Quebec on the true sentiments of liberty they have lately manifested, and cordially invites the co-operation of the Northern Colonies in the necessary means of obtaining relief from the common grievances. The paper, which is carefully written, and well fitted to have an influence in the North, is signed by its author as chairman, and Joseph Warren and Mackay.¹

The object of Adams and Warren was, to effect the same union of sentiment between the Northeastern British Provinces that had already been accomplished with the South. Not many years had passed, since the men of Massachusetts had marched to Canada, wrested it from the French, and added it to the British dominions. They conceived that the task might now be repeated for America, could a large party be found in Montreal or Quebec to favor the attempt; and it was with the view of ascertaining the state of public feeling there, preparatory to bringing them into the Colonial union, that this movement was commenced. Besides this, a correspondence was opened by Adams and Warren (as members of the Massachusetts Committee of Safety) with the Committee of Montreal, a body which seems to have had some affiliation with the popular measures in New England. These letters from both Committees bear the same date, and were despatched by John Brown, a brave and trusty adventurer, believed to have been one of two brothers who led the party to destroy the Gaspee in Rhode Island in 1772. This secret agent went by the way of

¹ The original draft is dated "Boston, Feb. 21, 1775."

Albany, and, finding the lakes impassable, proceeded to St. John's, where he arrived after fourteen days' travel, suffering great hardships on Lake Champlain and the surrounding country, which was under ice and water. On reaching Montreal, he delivered his letters, and obtained valuable information relative to the "Province of Quebec." He found that Governor Carleton had refused the application to print the address to the people of Canada, proceeding from the late Continental Congress, had abridged the liberty of the press, and now held the troops in readiness to march against Boston at the shortest notice. Through the industry and exertions of the friends of American liberty, their enemies had not yet been able to raise ten men for Administration. Brown moved actively and quietly among the French people, the priesthood, the hunters, and the Indians, who had peremptorily refused "to fight Boston." Numbers of French gentlemen had tendered their services to the Governor to raise a Canadian army, and join the King's troops; but Carleton, who had officers enough, complained only of the want of soldiers. The long letter in which this information was conveyed graphically describes the French and English character in Canada, and presents the condition of public affairs and society there with evident truth, and the style of one practised in such tours of observation. One thing the writer mentioned was to be kept a profound secret,—the plan already prepared by the people in the New Hampshire grant (Vermont) for the capture of Ticonderoga, should hostilities be commenced by the royal troops.¹

The Committee of Montreal, in their reply, after acknowledging the receipt of the letter from Adams and Warren, express their sorrow for the afflictions of New England, "but alas!" say they, "we are more the objects of pity and compassion than yourselves." Divided by interest, religion, manners, and language, they lived under constant apprehensions of evils to come, from the unlimited power of the

¹ J. Brown to Samuel Adams and J. Warren, March 29, 1775.

Governor, which struck all opposition dead ; while few dared to vent their griefs, but groaned in silence. Without the numbers or the wealth to be of any service, they cast themselves into the arms of the sister Colonies, relying upon the wisdom, vigor, and firmness of the general Continental Congress for their protection, and hoping they would entertain no animosity or resentment against them, because they could not join in the ensuing Congress, which, were they to attempt, the Canadians would join the government to frustrate. The bulk of the people, both English and Canadians, wished well to the American cause, but dared not stir a finger to help them, "being of no more estimation in the political machine than the sailors are in shaping the course or working the ship in which they sail."¹ This letter was probably written by Thomas Walker, who was in correspondence with Samuel Adams and Warren, and had already returned a preliminary answer from Montreal by a Mr. Jeffers of Boston. The information acquired by the Committee of Safety, through these messengers, proved of the highest importance, and enabled them to act in conjunction with the patriots farther north. The hint in Brown's letter respecting Ticonderoga was soon after acted upon, showing how reliable was his intelligence. The prudence and courage of Brown made him henceforth sought after by the Provincial Congresses, to obtain accurate information as to the movements of the enemy ; and soon after his return from this mission, General Schuyler, then in command of the Northern army, despatched this trusty emissary, now promoted to be a major, to Canada again. He served with distinction in the war, and his exploits were officially praised by those in authority.

After a session of sixteen days, the Provincial Congress adjourned on the 16th of February, to meet on the 22d of March at Concord. In the interim, besides attending to the

¹ Committee of Montreal to the Committee of Safety of Massachusetts, Montreal, April 28, 1775 (Journals of the Provincial Congress, pp. 751, 752).

duties of the Committees of Correspondence, both that of Boston and one appointed by the Congress to maintain communication, in its name, with the neighboring Colonies,¹ Adams is also found acting with the Committees of Safety and Supplies.² Their journals show that the Province was considered as being in a state of war, and every preparation was made for the approaching conflict. Gage's spies found the inland towns armed and drilling; and at one meeting of the Committee of Safety, when Adams was present, measures were adopted to meet the British troops, "if sallies" should be attempted into the country by night.

The usual oration was this year pronounced by Joseph Warren at the Old South, on the anniversary of the Boston Massacre. Adams was chairman of the committee appointed on the last occasion to procure an orator for the ensuing year,³ and he knew that, now the town was in possession of the British troops, an unusual degree of coolness and determination would be required; but Warren, learning that threats had been made, solicited for himself this post of danger; and, on the 5th of March, the church was crowded to hear him. Samuel Adams was moderator of the meeting, which appears to have waited for some time for the orator. The scene is thus described, in Rivington's paper, by a Loyalist, writing from Boston:—

"On Monday, the 5th instant, the Old South Meeting-house being crowded with nobility and fame, the Selectmen, with Adams, Church, and Hancock, Cooper, and others, assembled in the pulpit, which was covered with black, and we all sat gaping at one another above an hour expecting! At last, a single horse chair stopped at the apothecary's, opposite the meeting, from which descended the orator (Warren) of the day; and entering the shop, was followed by a servant with a bundle, in which were the Ciceronian toga, etc.

¹ Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 106.

² Journal of Committees of Safety and Supplies (Journals of the Provincial Congress, pp. 512, 513).

³ Boston Town Records for March, 1774.

"Having robed himself, he proceeded across the street to the meeting, and being received into the pulpit, he was announced by one of his fraternity to be the person appointed to declaim on the occasion. He then put himself into a Demosthenian posture, with a white handkerchief in his right hand, and his left in his breeches, — began and ended without action. He was applauded by the mob, but groaned at by people of understanding. One of the pulpiteers (Adams) then got up and proposed the nomination of another to speak next year on the bloody Massacre, — the first time that expression was made to the audience, — when some officers cried, 'O fie, fie!' The gallerians apprehending fire, bounded out of the windows, and swarmed down the gutters, like rats, into the street. The Forty-third Regiment returning accidentally from exercise, with drums beating, threw the whole body into the greatest consternation. There were neither pageantry, exhibitions, processions, or bells tolling as usual, but the night was remarked for being the quietest these many months past."¹

Another account sent to the same paper by a Loyalist, discloses the fact that an organized attempt was on foot to break up the meeting, should any expression escape the orator, tending to reflect upon the King or royal family, and this occasion had undoubtedly been decided upon as an opportune moment to commence an onslaught upon the people. Not only the account of a letter-writer in Boston, during this month, indicates such an intention, but information revealing the whole plan was sent to England, and there published in the following winter. A writer in London says: —

"A short time before the skirmish at Concord, Massachusetts, the officers of the army being highly incensed by the inhabitants of Boston, from many insults which had been offered them, and exasperated by the many inflammatory preachings and orations delivered from the pulpit, resolved privately to take an opportunity to seize the promoters of these discourses, the principals of which were Adams, Hancock, and Doctor Warren. The scheme was now

¹ Loring's Hundred Boston Orators, p. 60.

laid, and the young man fixed upon to carry it into execution was an ensign in the army, who was to give the signal to the rest, distributed about the church, by throwing an egg at Doctor Warren in the pulpit. However, this scheme was rendered abortive in the most whimsical manner, for he who was deputed to throw the egg fell in going to the church, dislocated his knee, and broke the egg, by which means the scheme failed; and the skirmish at Concord happening within a few days, these worthy patriots of their country retired to Roxbury.”¹

Adams directed the front seats in the church to be vacated, and invited the British officers, about forty of whom were present, to occupy them. A number, however, seated themselves on the stairs of the pulpit, and the whole of the military present continually interrupted Warren by laughing, hemming, and coughing. The oration must, indeed, have been unpalatable to them, for it treated of the baleful effects of standing armies in times of peace, while the assemblage itself was in fact a town meeting, — a portion of the democratic system which an army had been sent to suppress. Their efforts, however, did not succeed. One of the officers attempted to intimidate Warren by holding up one of his hands with several pistol-bullets on the open palm; but the orator, without discontinuing his discourse, dropped on them a white handkerchief. Every move on the part of the royal troops, as well as the populace, showed that each was awaiting some action of the other for the commencement of bloodshed. A volcano was ready to burst forth, and the time for the eruption was not far distant. The people, who were governed implicitly by the advice of their leaders, knew the importance of acting as yet on the defensive for the purpose of preserving their position with the sister Colonies. Samuel Adams, alluding to this scene in the church, soon after wrote to a friend in Virginia: —

“I had long expected that they would take that occasion to beat

¹ Extract from a London paper, quoted in the *Virginia Gazette*, Dec. 2, 1775 (*Moore's Diary of the Revolution*, I. 157).

up a breeze, and therefore (seeing many of the officers present before the orator came in), as Moderator of the meeting, I took care to have them treated with civility, inviting them into convenient seats, so that they might have no pretence to behave ill; for it is a good maxim in politics, as well as in war, to put and keep the enemy in the wrong. They behaved tolerably well until the oration was finished, when, upon a motion made for the appointment of another orator, as usual they began to hiss, which irritated the assembly to the greatest degree, and confusion ensued; they, however, did not gain their end, — which was apparently to break up the meeting, — for order was soon restored, and we proceeded regularly, and finished the business. I am persuaded, were it not for the danger of precipitating a crisis, not a man of them would have been spared.”¹

On the 22d of March, the Congress met at Concord, pursuant to adjournment, when Gerry, Paine, and Adams were appointed a committee to bring in a resolve, expressing the sense of the Congress, that “for this people to relax in their preparations to defend themselves would be attended with the most dangerous consequences.” The report was presented the same afternoon, and was ordered to be printed in all the newspapers.² It pointed out the danger of subjugation, and exhorted the inhabitants to be ready to oppose with firmness and resolution, at the utmost hazard, every attempt for that purpose. The constant industry of the Committee on the State of the Province is indicated by the frequency of their reports on the most vital subjects; and the unanimity with which these were adopted, as fast as submitted to the Assembly, shows the perfect confidence reposed in the wisdom of this body. Adams, also, repeatedly appears on special committees with the principal men of the Congress. He was chairman of one, consisting of himself, Cushing, and Colonel Patterson, to draft a letter to the Rev. Samuel Kirkland, the celebrated missionary among

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, March 21, 1775.

² Journals of the Provincial Congress, pp. 109, 110.

the Indians, and an address to the Chief of the Mohawks, with the view of securing the friendship of that powerful tribe during the coming struggle. The adventurer, Brown, writing to Adams and Warren from Montreal, had particularly referred to the repeated efforts of the British authorities to enlist the savage Indian nations of Canada and the Northwest against the Colonists. The letter to Dr. Kirkland, alludes to this.

“We are induced to take this measure, as we have been informed that those who are inimical to us in Canada have been tampering with those nations, and endeavoring to attach them to the interest of those who are attempting to deprive us of our inestimable rights and privileges, and to subjugate the Colonies to arbitrary power. From a confidence in your attachment to the cause of liberty and your country, we now transmit to you the enclosed address, and desire you would deliver it to the Sachem of the Mohawk tribe, to be communicated to the rest of the Five Nations, and that you would use your influence with them to join with us in the defence of our rights; but if you cannot prevail with them to take an active part in this glorious cause, that you would at least engage them to stand neuter, and not by any means to aid and assist our enemies.”

The address to the Mohawks was written by Samuel Adams, as is indicated by fragments still existing of the original draft in his handwriting, before being amended by the Congress, previous to its adoption. To reach and secure the sympathies of those rude savages required a different style of writing from that of the state papers of the day; and it is to show how admirably the writer combined dignity of sentiment with the simple and touching language, suited to the occasion that the letter is introduced.

“BROTHERS, — We, the delegates of the inhabitants of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, being come together to consider what may be best for you and ourselves to do, in order to get ourselves rid of those hardships which we feel and fear, have thought it our duty to tell you, our good brothers, what our fathers in Great Britain have done and threaten to do with us.

“ Brothers, — You have heard how our fathers were obliged by the cruelty of their brethren to leave their country ; how they crossed the great lake and came here ; how they purchased this land with their own money ; and how, since that time, they and we, their sons and grandsons, have built our houses and cut down the trees, and cleared and improved the land at their and our own expense ; how we have fought for them, and conquered Canada and a great many other places which they have had and have not paid for ; after all which and many other troubles, we thought we had reason to hope that they would be kind to us, and allow us to enjoy ourselves, and sit in our own houses, and eat our own victuals in peace and quiet ; but alas ! our brothers, we are greatly distressed, and we will tell you our grief ; for you, as well as we, are in danger.

“ Brothers, — Our fathers in Great Britain tell us our land and houses and cattle and money are not our own ; that we ourselves are not our own men, but their servants ; they have endeavored to take away our money without our leave, and have sent their great vessels and a great many warriors for that purpose.

“ Brothers, — We used to send our vessels on the great lake, whereby we were able to get clothes and what we needed for ourselves and you ; but such has lately been their conduct that we cannot ; they have told us we shall have no more guns, no powder to use, and kill our wolves and other game, nor to send to you for you to kill your victuals with, and to get skins to trade with us, to buy you blankets and what you want. How can you live without powder and guns ? But we hope to supply you soon with both, of our own making.

“ Brothers, — They have made a law to establish the religion of the Pope in Canada, which lies so near you. We much fear some of your children may be induced, instead of worshipping the only true God, to pay *his* dues to images made with their own hands.

“ Brothers, — These and many other hardships we are threatened with, which, no doubt, in the end will equally affect you ; for the same reason they would get our lands, they would take away yours. All we want is, that we and you may enjoy that liberty and security which we have a right to enjoy, and that we may not lose that good land which enables us to feed our wives and children. We think it our duty to inform you of our danger, and desire you to give notice

to all your kindred; and as we much fear they will attempt to cut our throats, and if you should allow them to do that, there will nobody remain to keep them from you, we therefore earnestly desire you to whet your hatchet, and be prepared with us to defend our liberties and lives.

“Brothers, — We humbly beseech that God who lives above, and does what is right here below, to enlighten your minds to see that you ought to endeavor to prevent our fathers from bringing those miseries upon us; and to his good providence we commend you.”

Besides this address, there appears another to the Stockbridge Indians, a number of whom had enlisted as minute-men, emanating from the Committee on the State of the Province, and apparently written by Adams; no proof, however, remains of his authorship. They also reported as to “what movements of the troops should make it fit to call the militia together to act on the defensive.” This report, of which no copy exists in the journal, was read and considered in paragraphs and passed unanimously; and it was agreed that when notice was given for the assembling of the Provincial forces, the Congress should repair without delay to the place to which they should be adjourned.¹ Until the close of this session, the Committee on the State of the Province, composed of the chief intellects, appear to have exercised entire control over the Congress. It had originated that active working agency, the Committee of Safety, which, with Hancock as its chairman, was vested with almost supreme power. Acting under a code of rules prepared by the first Committee, they were authorized to assemble the militia of the Province, wherever and whenever they deemed it necessary to repel any attempt to enforce the late acts of Parliament, and could thus, at their own option, have precipitated England and America into a bloody struggle, had the occasion presented itself. They met at Concord during March and April. The Committee

¹ Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 112.

on the State of the Province evidently digested the measures of the Congress, and had them fully prepared before reporting plans of action. There is scarcely one instance where any of their decisions were recommitted. Sometimes the members being absent, owing to the cold, uncomfortable condition of the Assembly-room, it was necessary to order the door-keeper to summon them to hear and vote upon these reports.¹

On the 8th of April, when one hundred and three were present, the door-keeper having been directed "to call in the members, and call none out until the further order of the Congress," the Committee on the State of the Province reported a resolve on a momentous question, which finally passed with but seven opposing voices. This provided for an armed alliance of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, to raise and equip a general army, and with this view to send delegates immediately to negotiate with the said other governments.² In deciding upon this measure, the Congress, not limiting itself to the direction of affairs in Massachusetts, was desirous, on the old plan of union originating with Adams, three years before, in the Committees of Correspondence, to bring all New England into a confederation for the common defence. The four sister Provinces would then be in arms, and virtually be at war with Britain. Three delegates were elected to treat with each of the New England Colonies, receiving their written instructions from the ruling committee, who also decided upon the number of men who would be required for the proposed allied army.³

The quick succeeding events probably disconcerted the original plan to some extent, though it was in the main suc-

¹ One of the resolutions reads: "In consideration of the coldness of the season, and that the Congress sit in a room without fire, *Resolved*, That all those members who incline thereto may sit with their hats on while in Congress."

² Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 135.

³ *Idem*, pp. 136-138.

cessful, and the several deputies departed on their mission. Colonel Foster, who had been selected for Connecticut, appears in Brookfield two weeks later, whence he writes to the President of the Massachusetts Congress, that in his interview with Governor Trumbull, the latter decided to call a special session of the Legislature at Hartford,¹ which met immediately, and ordered the enlistment and equipment of six regiments of militia for the defence of that Colony, and provided for the support of such as had started for Massachusetts on hearing the news of Lexington.² Of the delegates to New Hampshire, neither Freeman nor Gerry performed their mission; but the Congress sent James Sullivan of Biddeford, with despatches to solicit the co-operation of that Province. He writes from Exeter of the success of his "embassy";³ and on the meeting of the New Hampshire Provincial Congress, and the arrival of additional delegates from Massachusetts, the forces raised were organized as a portion "of the New England army."⁴ The Rhode Island mission originally consisted of Colonel Walker, Dr. Perkins, and James Warren of Plymouth. But on the 20th of April, the two deputies named as being at Providence were Warren and Dr. Pynchon, who were waiting to consult the Assembly on their errand.⁵ The business was afterwards more particularly confided to Edward Rawson, who reached Providence while the Legislature was in session.⁶ The Rhode Island House immediately voted to equip an army of fifteen hundred men for the safety of the Province, and, if necessary, "to join and co-operate with the forces of the neighboring Colonies."⁷ Darius Sessions, the Deputy-Governor, and three others of the upper House dissented, fearing "the fatal consequences to their charter privileges," and believing that such a co-operation with the rest of New England "would involve the Colonies in the horrors of a civil

¹ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, II. 363, 372, 378.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 411-422.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 652, 657.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

war"; but the action of the other branch was unanimous. Thus New England alone formed a defensive league against the power of Britain,—the project emanating from the Committee on the State of the Province in the Massachusetts Congress.¹ But for the sudden affair at Lexington, the original order of the embassies might not have been changed. That event hastened the consummation of the scheme, which, however, had no bloodshed occurred, would have been steadily pursued by Massachusetts.²

¹ The agency of Mr. Adams in the Committee on the State of the Province is continually shown by the journals of this Congress; and although his name is not found among those appointed as a Committee of Safety, yet his presence at their important meetings is indicated by the records.

² The proposition afterwards made by Samuel Adams to Dr. Franklin at Philadelphia, to declare the New England Colonies independent of Great Britain, if others were disposed to hold back, may have been in some way connected with this armed alliance. See p. 358 of this volume.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Approach of Hostilities. — Expedition to destroy Military Stores, and to seize Adams and Hancock. — They are warned by their Friends. — March of the British to Lexington and Concord. — First Blood of the Revolutionary War. — Uncontrollable Joy of Adams. — He sees the Dawn of Independence. — Adams and Hancock set out for the Second Continental Congress. — Secret Meeting with Governor Trumbull at Hartford. — Consultation with the New York Committee of Safety. — Reception of the Massachusetts Delegates at New York. — Escort through New Jersey. — Their Entrance into Philadelphia.

THE event to which Samuel Adams had long looked forward, and the result of which he knew must necessarily be American Independence, was now at hand. He had stated it in his letters as an absolute certainty, that "one regular attempt to subdue those in any other Colony, whatever might be the first issue of the attempt, would open a quarrel which would never be closed till " America was free.¹ That attempt was now made. Certain movements among the troops in Boston indicated that an expedition into the country was planning, and the Committees of Safety and Supplies, upon information sent to Samuel Adams, energetically engaged in removing cannon, ammunition, and provisions to places of security.² The approach of hostilities caused many families to remove from Boston into the country; and the Congress recommended the Committee of Donations to afford all assistance in their power to poor families to aid them in quitting the town.³ They adjourned on the 15th of April, to meet at the same place on the 10th of May.

Preparations were meantime going forward with all possi-

¹ S. Adams to A. Lee, Feb. 14, 1775.

^{*} Gordon, I. 476.

² Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 142.

ble secrecy, among the British forces in Boston, for an expedition to Concord to seize the stores collected there, and destroy the magazines. Another object was to obtain possession of Adams and Hancock. The extracts already given from letters written in February prove that the seizure of these two patriots, either to hold them as hostages or send them for trial to England, where their death was decided upon, had been a prime object with the Ministry. Nothing prevented the execution of this plan, but the certainty that such an attempt would be resisted by the whole force of the Province. Had he dared, Gage would have ordered the capture of all the leaders who were present at Warren's oration in March. No better opportunity could ever again offer; but the fact of these citizens thus boldly arraying themselves in public with the sentence of death hanging over them proves their confidence in the ability of the Province to sustain itself, while the hesitancy of Gage does not accord well with the superiority claimed by the British troops. That the fatal sentence had already gone out, there is little reason to doubt. A gentleman, writing from London to a friend in Boston about this time, says:—

“A steady friend to America called upon me this afternoon to acquaint me with the following intelligence communicated to him by . . . this day, which you may rely on as a fact. The . . . said that the administration, on Friday, received advices from General Gage to the 18th of March, wherein he acknowledges the receipt of the King's order to apprehend Messrs. Cushing, Adams, Hancock, &c., and send them over to England to be tried; but that the second orders, which were to hang them in Boston, he said, the General had not then received. The General expressed his fears on the occasion; and, in hopes of their being reversed, he should delay the execution a while longer, because he must, if the orders were fulfilled, come to an engagement, the event of which he had every reason to apprehend would be fatal to himself and the King's troops; as the Massachusetts government had at least fifteen thousand men ready trained for the onset, and, besides, had every public and private road occupied by the militia, so as to prevent his marching

into the country, and which were, at the same time, ready to facilitate any attempt against the army; in which unwelcome situation he earnestly wished for a reinforcement, if that disagreeable order must be effected.”¹

It was indeed reported in high circles in England, that when the General received orders to send the leaders across the Atlantic, he returned for answer that, should he attempt any such thing, that would be the last letter they would ever receive from him, for he should be knocked on the head.² But as spring advanced, and the news arrived of reinforcements on the way, he grew bolder, and resolved to carry into practice his plan of seizing the obnoxious leaders,³ which thus far he had lacked the resolution to venture upon. After the adjournment of Congress, Adams and Hancock went to Lexington, where they remained several days at the house of the Rev. Jonas Clark. A number of intimations were sent to them of the intended movement and of their personal danger; but Adams thought that the military stores were rather the object of the expedition, since, to seize upon two persons, a smaller force would be employed. He had not seen the government despatches to Gage, directing the apprehension of Hancock and himself, and he was unquestionably mistaken. In the old Revolutionary play, at the period of the Lexington battle, Gage is made to say: —

“If Colonel Smith succeeds in his embassy (and I think there is no doubt of it), I shall have the pleasure this evening, I expect, of having my friends Hancock’s and Adams’s good company. I’ll make each of them a handsome pair of iron ruffles, and Major Provost shall provide a suitable entertainment.”⁴

Gordon says, “A daughter of liberty, unequally yoked in

¹ Letter dated April 25, 1775. Force’s American Archives, Fourth Series, II. 386. Compare Gordon, I. 502.

² Walpole’s Reign of George the Third, I. 486.

³ Frothingham’s Siege of Boston, p. 46.

⁴ Loring’s Hundred Boston Orators, p. 85.

point of politics, sent word by a trusty hand to Mr. Samuel Adams, residing in company with Mr. Hancock at Lexington, about thirteen miles from Charlestown, that the troops were coming out in a few days.”¹ Elbridge Gerry also despatched an express to Hancock, warning him that officers of the royal army had been sent out in advance of the troops, and that some evil design was suspected. The two patriots were also apprised of their danger by Mr. Ballard and by Dr. Warren, who observed the movements of the troops, and sent Paul Revere post-haste to convey the warning.² To prevent an alarm as far as possible, officers had been stationed on the night of the 18th along the roads leading from Boston, and several expresses were stopped. Three, however, arrived, — a verbal one, one from Warren, and one from Richard Devens, a member of the Committee of Safety.³ The royal troops, eight hundred in number, commenced moving at ten o’clock, under Lieutenant-Colonel Smith. They embarked at the foot of the Common, landed at Lechmere’s Point, crossed the marshes, and proceeded in perfect silence upon the West Cambridge road. As they passed the house where several members of the Provincial Congress were lodged, the inmates looked out upon the array of polished arms glittering in the bright moonlight. An officer and file of men were suddenly detached, and sent to search the house, when Gerry and Orne escaped, and the troops continued their march.

Paul Revere had previously concerted with Colonel Conant and some others in Charlestown that, if the British went out by water, he would display two lanterns in the North Church steeple, and if by land, one, as a signal that the news might be conveyed to Lexington, should the communication with the peninsula be cut off. Having instructed a friend to that effect, he was rowed across Charles River.

¹ Gordon’s History, I. 476.

² Loring’s Hundred Boston Orators, p. 81.

³ Frothingham’s Siege of Boston, p. 58.

It was the young flood, the ship was winding, and the moon rising. Landing in Charlestown, Revere found that his signal had been understood. He then took horse, and rode towards Lexington.¹ After several adventures on the way, in which he narrowly escaped capture, he reached the house of Mr. Clark about midnight, and gave the alarm. He was just in time to elude the vigilance of the British in Boston; for Earl Percy, having accidentally ascertained that the secret was out, gave orders to allow no person to leave the town. Revere found the family at rest, and a guard of eight men stationed at the house, for the protection of Adams and Hancock. He rode up, and requested admittance, but the Sergeant replied that the family before retiring had desired that they might not be disturbed by any noise about the house. "Noise!" replied Revere, "you'll have noise enough before long. The Regulars are coming out!" He was then admitted.² About one o'clock on the morning of the 19th, the militia were mustered on the green near the meeting-house, and messengers sent for additional information. By two o'clock, the countrymen numbered one hundred and thirty. The guns were loaded with powder and ball in the presence of Adams, Hancock, and Clark. One of the messengers returning with the report that no troops could be seen, and the weather being chilly, the men were dismissed with orders to appear again at beat of drum. Most of them retired to Buckman's Tavern, near by.

Colonel Smith had marched his column but a few miles, when the ringing of bells and firing of guns satisfied him that the country was alarmed. He immediately detached six companies of light infantry, under command of Major Pitcairn, with orders to press forward, and secure the two bridges at Concord, while he sent back for reinforcements. By capturing those whom he met upon the road, Pitcairn

¹ Paul Revere's narrative, in Loring's *Boston Orators*, pp. 81-84.

² Frothingham's *Siege of Boston*, pp. 58, 59.

prevented the news of his approach from going before him, until he came within a mile and a half of Lexington meeting-house, when a horseman, who had succeeded in eluding the troops, galloped into the village. Then, about seventy townspeople assembled as the drums beat, and at the sound the British halted to load. The advance guard and grenadiers then hurried forward at double quick, and when within five or six rods of the Provincials, Pitcairn shouted, "Disperse, ye villains! ye rebels, disperse! Lay down your arms! Why don't you lay down your arms and disperse?"¹ Most of the minute-men, undecided whether to fire or retreat, stood motionless, having been ordered by their commander not to fire first. Some were joining the ranks, and others leaving them, when Pitcairn in a loud voice gave the word to fire, at the same time discharging his pistol. The order was obeyed at first by a few guns, which did no execution, and immediately after by a deadly discharge from the whole British force. A few of the militia, no longer hesitating, returned the fire, but without serious effect. Parker, seeing the utter disparity of forces, ordered his men to disperse. The Regulars continued their fire while any of the militia remained in sight, killing eight and wounding ten.² The village green, where this event took place, has been aptly termed by the historian, "a field of murder, not of battle." A few farmers had assembled, willing to defend their homes, but determined not to commence hostilities, and unsuspecting of the sudden onslaught. The firing was soon over, and the royal troops remained masters of the field; but the sacrifice of that little band revolutionized a world. It was the first scene in the drama which was to carry with it the destinies of mankind. Adams and Hancock, as the soldiers made their appearance, were persuaded to retire to the adjacent village of Woburn, their safety being regarded as of the utmost importance. Passing through the fields, while the sunlight glistened in the dew of the fresh spring morn-

¹ Bancroft, VII. 293.² Frothingham's *Siege of Boston*, p. 63.

ing, Adams felt his soul swell with uncontrollable joy as he contemplated the mighty future, and with prophetic utterance of his country's dawning independence, he exclaimed, "O! what a glorious morning is this!"¹

The British troops immediately continued their march to Concord, and as yet in too great force to warrant the Provincials in attacking them. On reaching the town, the North and South Bridges were secured by the Regulars, when the search for stores commenced. Meantime, the militia of Concord and surrounding towns formed, and a detachment, under Major Buttrick, drove the enemy in confusion from the North Bridge, and pursued them towards their main body.² Having destroyed a quantity of flour, spiked two cannon, thrown some balls into the river, and rifled a few private dwellings, the troops prepared for their return to Boston. As the drums were sounding on every road leading to Concord, and militia-men were hurrying in from all quarters, the British commander saw the necessity of speedy movements. He pushed on with his command, but was met with a galling fire from behind trees, walls, and rocks, so that the march was fast changing into a confused retreat. A series of sharp fights ensued along the road, until the troops, harrassed and wearied out, began to run, and were

¹ The account comes originally from Gordon (I. 479). Various writers have quoted the words, which have become classical. Everett in his Concord Address, in 1825, investing it in his own beautiful language, says: "That memorable exclamation, than which nothing more generous, nothing more sublime, can be found in the records of Grecian or Roman heroism." And in the graphic picture by Bancroft: "Heedless of his own danger, Samuel Adams, with the voice of a prophet, exclaimed, 'O! what a glorious morning is this!' for he saw that his country's independence was rapidly hastening on, and, like Columbus in the tempest, knew that the storm did but bear him the more swiftly towards the undiscovered world." Gordon adds to his contemporary description of the scene: "His companion did not penetrate his meaning, and thought the allusion was only to the aspect of the sky"; and Eliot, who passed his life among those with whom these events were familiar, gives a more circumstantial account of Adams's remark, and the subsequent explanation when his friend failed to appreciate the sentiment.

² Bancroft, VII. 303. Hildreth, III. 68. Barry, II. 513.

driven before the Americans like sheep. Lord Percy now came in sight, with twelve hundred men, and two field-pieces. They kept the militia at bay with their cannon, and forming a square, enclosed the fugitives, who lay upon the ground, with "their tongues hanging out of their mouths, like those of dogs after a chase."¹ On resuming their march, the British found an enemy at every defile and height. The marksmen poured continuous volleys upon the ranks, from every covert, changing their positions as the columns moved on, and firing on each flank in front and from behind. At West Cambridge the fight was most determined, and the exhausted British would have been captured but for the dilatoriness of Colonel Pickering, who neglected to intercept them in front with his fine Salem and Marblehead regiment.² Soon after sunset, almost on the run, the troops reached Charlestown Common, where, sheltered by the guns of the ships, further pursuit was prevented, and the crest-fallen fugitives regained their lines. The American loss during the day was forty-nine killed, thirty-nine wounded, and five missing. That of the British, in killed, wounded, and missing, amounted to two hundred and seventy-three, among whom were several officers.³ The army had left on its bloody route many a desolate hearth, but dearly had they paid for the needless expedition, which resulted in nothing but shame and defeat to themselves, while it had practically demonstrated the resources of the Provincials. The whole country of New England now sprang to arms with a unanimity astonishing to Gage and his officers; and as the tidings flew through the continent, the Colonies, animated with one sentiment of liberty, stood up to oppose the tyranny of England.

The events of the 19th of April brought the Provincial Congress together in a week from the time of their adjournment. Since the recent flight of the British, they were not

¹ Bancroft, VII. 306.

² Gordon, I. 484. Bancroft, VII. 309.

³ Bancroft. Hildreth, III. 69.

likely to be interrupted. Only a few of the members could have received notifications. Richard Devens was chosen Chairman, and John Murray Clerk. The first business was respecting a letter from Josiah Quincy to Samuel Adams, which had been delivered to Elbridge Gerry, with the desire that it might be opened in Congress in Mr. Adams's absence. After some debate, it was ordered that the members present belonging to the Committee on the State of the Province retire, open, and peruse the letter, and report what they think proper. The Committee on their return desired that the whole might be read to the Congress, which was done, and the letter was sent to Doctor Warren, to be used at his discretion. The next packet brought all that was mortal of Josiah Quincy to his native shores. The Congress adjourned to Watertown, where effective measures for the public defence were adopted. One of the resolutions passed on Sunday, in the town school-house, was, that thirteen thousand six hundred men be immediately raised in Massachusetts.¹

Adams and Hancock, after quitting Lexington on the morning of the engagement, remained a day or two in Woburn and Billerica; and the time drawing near for their departure for the Continental Congress, which was soon to meet at Philadelphia, they proceeded on their way as far as Worcester, where they arrived on the 24th. Here it would seem they were to await the coming of John Adams, Cushing, and Paine, and then the five were to travel together with an escort. Finding none of them at Worcester, Hancock wrote to the Committee of Safety, who were now at Watertown with the Congress:—

GENTLEMEN:—

Mr. S. Adams and myself, just arrived here, find no intelligence from you and no guard. We hear an express has just passed through this place to you from New York, informing that Administration is bent upon pushing matters; and that four regiments are

¹ Journals of the Provincial Congress, pp. 147, 148.

expected there. How are we to proceed? Where are our brethren? Surely we ought to be supported. I had rather be with you; and at present am fully determined to be with you before I proceed. I beg, by the return of this express, to hear from you; and pray furnish us with depositions of the conduct of the troops, the certainty of their firing first, and every circumstance relative to the conduct of the troops from the 19th instant to this time, that we may be able to give some account of matters as we proceed, especially at Philadelphia. Also I beg you would order your secretary to make out an account of your proceedings since what has taken place; what your plan is; what prisoners we have, and what they have of ours; who of note were killed on both sides; who commands our forces, &c.

Are our men in good spirits? For God's sake, do not suffer the spirit to subside, until they have perfected the reduction of our enemies. Boston *must* be entered; the troops must be sent away or —. Our friends are valuable, but our country must be saved. I have an interest in that town. What can be the enjoyment of that to me, if I am obliged to hold it at the will of General Gage or any one else? I doubt not your vigilance, your fortitude, and resolution. Do let us know how you proceed. We must have the Castle. The ships must be —. Stop up the harbor against large vessels coming. You know better what to do than I can point out.

Where is Mr. Cushing? Are Mr. Paine and Mr. John Adams to be with us? What are we to depend upon? We travel rather as deserters, which I will not submit to. I will return and join you, if I cannot detain this man, as I much want to hear from you. How goes on the Congress? Who is your president? Are the members hearty? Pray remember Mr. S. Adams and myself to all friends. God be with you.

I am, gentlemen, your faithful and hearty countryman,

JOHN HANCOCK.¹

They continued their journey without awaiting the arrival of the other delegates, and set out from Worcester on the 27th.² Whether they were attended by the escort men-

¹ To the Committee of Safety, Worcester, April 24, 1775 (Loring's *Hundred Boston Orators*, p. 92).

² Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 527, note.

tioned in Hancock's letter does not appear. They were at Hartford on the 29th, where they held a secret meeting with Governor Trumbull and the Council, and planned the surprise of Ticonderoga.¹ John Brown, the confidential messenger of Adams and Warren on Canadian affairs, had returned from the North, and doubtless, in his interviews with the patriots, had given information in addition to what he had sent by letters. He was one of the leaders in the expedition which was now concerted on the basis originally proposed by the Green Mountain Boys, who were expected to be ready with a force of a thousand men. During this conference it was agreed to draw three hundred pounds from the treasury to further the enterprise. It was designed to surprise the forts, and, in case of success, troops would be sent from Western Connecticut to repair and hold them. It was probably on this subject that the New York Committee of Safety received about this time a letter from the Albany Committee of Correspondence, on reading which they voted: "That as Messrs. Adams and Hancock are daily expected in this city, the Committee of Correspondence and Intelligence wait on them, and request a private conference on the subject-matter of the above letter."²

Cushing, John Adams, and Paine overtook their colleagues before they reached New York, and the Massachusetts and Connecticut delegations having joined them on the way, they arrived together on the evening of Saturday, May 6th. The news of their approach had gone before them; and at Kingsbridge, some miles outside the town, they were met by a great number of the principal gentlemen of the place, in carriages and on horseback, and escorted in by near a thousand men under arms. Crowds lined the roads, showing that the occasion was considered one of unusual importance. As the strangers passed through the streets, their arrival was announced by the ringing of bells and

¹ Bancroft, VII. 338. Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, II. 507.

² New York Gazetteer, May 11, 1775.

other demonstrations of joy; and either as a mark of respect, or because there was danger of surprise and seizure, double sentries were placed at the doors of their lodgings. The private meeting with the Committee of Correspondence probably took place at the assembling of the Committee of Safety, on Monday. John Morin Scott reported the draft of a letter in answer to the one from Albany upon which Adams and Hancock were to be consulted, which was approved and forwarded. They made but short stay in New York. On Monday morning, the 8th, the members from three Colonies, consisting of fourteen gentlemen, including, besides those from Massachusetts, Roger Sherman, Silas Dean, Eliphalet Dyer, Philip Livingston, James Duane, John Alsop, Francis Lewis, William Floyd, and Simon Boerum, set out for Philadelphia, attended by a great train to the North River Ferry, where vessels were provided, and about five hundred gentlemen and an escort of two hundred militia under arms crossed the ferry with them. At the ferry, the delegates were received by a number of gentlemen from Newark, a troop of horse, and a company of grenadiers, who attended them to Newark, where an entertainment was provided and a number of patriotic toasts were drunk. After dinner, they were escorted to Elizabethtown. There they were met and conducted into the place by its principal gentlemen and the military.¹ These honors were continued all the way to Philadelphia, where preparations had been made for their arrival. A spectator of the reception wrote in his diary: —

“Early in the morning a great number of persons rode out several miles, hearing that the Eastern delegates were approaching, when, about eleven o’clock, the cavalcade appeared (I being near the upper end of Fore Street); first, two or three hundred gentlemen on horseback, preceded, however, by the newly chosen city military officers, two and two, with drawn swords, followed by John Hancock and Samuel Adams in a phaeton and pair, the former looking

¹ Force’s American Archives, Fourth Series, II. 517.

as if his journey and high living, or solicitude to support the dignity of the first man in Massachusetts, had impaired his health. Next came John Adams and Thomas Cushing in a single-horse chaise: behind followed Robert Treat Paine, and after him the New York delegation and some from the Province of Connecticut, etc., etc. The rear was brought up by a hundred carriages, the streets crowded with people of all ages, sexes, and ranks. The procession marched with a slow, solemn pace. On its entrance into the city, all the bells were set to ringing and chiming, and every mark of respect that could be was expressed; not much, I presume, to the secret liking of their fellow-delegates from the other Colonies, who doubtless had to digest the distinction as easily as they could.”¹

This public reception, it may be supposed, Mr. Adams found it difficult to reconcile with his cherished democratic principles. He utterly detested every kind of display, especially when shown to persons in public station, unless some particular line of policy rendered it necessary. He considered such vanities as degrading to the human character, and would never suffer any attempt at homage to be used towards himself, under any circumstances, and, for the same reason, despised flattery of the great. But though pomp and magnificence had no attractions for his mind, he was not insensible to their effect upon others, and he did not neglect them where they could be made serviceable to the public cause. His aversion to parade is illustrated by an anecdote, related of some occasion like the present entrance of the delegates into Philadelphia, though it has been located elsewhere and after the Declaration of Independence:—

“The people were attempting to take the horses from the carriage, in order to drag it themselves. Mr. Adams remonstrated against it. His companion, pleased with the intended compliment, was desirous of enjoying it, and endeavored to remove the objection of Mr. Adams, to which he at last replied: ‘If you wish to be gratified with so humiliating a spectacle, I will get out and walk, for I

¹ Curwen’s Journal, May 10, 1775. Pennsylvania Gazette, May, 1775.

will not countenance an act by which my fellow-citizens shall degrade themselves into beasts.' This prevented its execution."

The journey had been long and tedious, and it may be imagined that our travellers, on their arrival, were not improved in appearance. The outfit of clothing which a number of the friends of Mr. Adams had sent to him the year before was left at his house when he quitted Boston prior to the battle of Lexington. From that time there had been no opportunity of obtaining it, and his wardrobe was now literally limited to the clothes which he was wearing. On reaching Philadelphia a new outfit was of course indispensable. Mr. Adams debated for some time within himself whether this expenditure should be drawn from his own scanty funds or be made a public charge on Massachusetts, for he was always scrupulously exact in these matters. The sum, though trifling in fact, was considerable to him; and, besides, an important principle was involved. He decided that, under the circumstances, such an expense should be met from the public finances, and it is hardly necessary to add, that at Watertown the bill was promptly audited.

Congress met on the 10th, (it being the time to which the former one had adjourned,) and elected Peyton Randolph President and Charles Thomson Secretary. On the next day, Mr. Duché opened the proceedings with prayer, as in the last Congress, after which the several delegations presented their credentials.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Second Continental Congress. — Adams secretly aims at an immediate Declaration of Independence. — The Times not yet ripe for it. — Another Petition to the King voted. — Death of Josiah Quincy. — His Public Services. — His Tribute to the Greatness of Adams. — Peyton Randolph vacates the Chair of Congress. — Hancock elected his Successor. — Washington chosen Commander-in-Chief, on the Nomination of John and Samuel Adams. — Disappointment of Hancock. — General Gage in the King's Name offers Pardon to all but ADAMS and HANCOCK. — Adams's Contempt for the Proclamation. — Last Letter of Joseph Warren to Adams. — Battle of Bunker Hill. — Death of Warren. — Friendship of Adams and Warren. — Washington sets out for Boston. — Introductory Letters from Samuel and John Adams. — General Lee at Cambridge. — Proceedings of Congress. — They adjourn until September. — Return of the Massachusetts Delegates.

SAMUEL ADAMS came to this second Congress impressed with the necessity of an immediate declaration of independence. He considered, indeed, that the Concord fight had virtually severed all connection between Britain and America, and he thenceforth regarded every measure with something of impatience that did not tend directly towards that result.¹ In this he differed from most of his distinguished friends in New England, except Hawley, Quincy, and one or two others of that stamp. None of his colleagues in this Congress were yet fully prepared for the extreme event. Even John Adams, who so strongly advocated independence in the summer of 1776, afterwards said: "There was not a moment, during the Revolution, when I would not have given everything I possessed for a restoration to the state of things before the contest began, provided we could have had a sufficient security for its continuance." Samuel Adams, on the other hand, knew no political creed but absolute, un-

¹ Samuel Adams to James Warren, Dec. 31, 1776. See also Gordon, II. 295.

conditional independence.¹ "He hungered and thirsted after it" as an object of priceless attainment, in comparison to which all else on earth was of secondary importance. The present Congress had assembled, occupied for the most part with the lingering hope of conciliation. They had, as a body, no thought of separation from the parent country, entertaining the sole view of a redress of grievances and the restoration of harmony. The question of independence was never raised during the session; but the discussions were between the advocates of decided measures for the prevention of farther encroachments and the conservative element, which included most of the members from the Middle and Southern Colonies, who feared the New England influence, still cherished an attachment for the royal government, and were willing to resort once more to supplications for justice. Against the wishes and exertions of most of the Northern delegates, another petition to the King was voted. Samuel Adams acquiesced in the decision, for he saw that the time was not yet ripe for the great object he had in view.

"The Americans," says Bancroft, "had not designed to establish an independent government; of their leading statesmen, it was the desire of Samuel Adams alone. They had all been educated in the love and admiration of constitutional monarchy, and even John Adams and Jefferson so sincerely shrunk back from the attempt at creating another government in its stead, that to the last moment they were most anxious to avert a separation, if it could be avoided without a loss of their inherited liberties."²

It was shortly after his arrival in Philadelphia that Mr. Adams received intelligence of the death of Josiah Quincy, who, finding his life fast ebbing away under the ravages of consumption, had taken ship again for America, but died within sight of his native shores, breathing as his latest wish, that he might live long enough to have an interview with

¹ Illustrations of this will be found in Bancroft, VI. 192, 253, 267, 385, 430, 524.

² Bancroft, VIII. 161.

Samuel Adams and Joseph Warren.¹ He had heard in England the bitter hostility against his countrymen, and continued in his writings to admonish the Americans of their danger. His ardent spirit was willing to proceed to any extremes to obtain vengeance on the minions of tyranny; and, reminding his friends that no nation had ever achieved its deliverance from oppression by a bloodless contest, he urged an immediate appeal to the sword. Mention has already been made of the friendship existing between Samuel Adams and Josiah Quincy. It was rather like that of father and son; for Samuel Adams was twenty-two years the elder, and, in his public career, had been the guide and preceptor of his young friend. Quincy looked up to him as the great leader in America, and regarded him socially with an affectionate reverence which ceased only with his death. "Let our friend, Samuel Adams, be among the first to whom you show my letters,"² were his directions when writing to his wife from England. Another of his letters to the same person reveals his admiration for his friend, and, at the same time, shows in what estimation the talents and political wisdom of Adams were held in that country. The letter has an assumed signature, owing to the danger to which a correspondence with Boston was at that time exposed. He says:—

"The character of your Mr. Samuel Adams runs very high here. I find many who consider him the first politician in the world. I have found more reason every day to convince me that he has been right when others supposed him wrong."³

Of the debates in Congress at this period no account exists, and the agency of Adams in the various duties to which he now applied himself can never be known. By reference to the journals,—which, however, contain only a bare record of the resolutions and proceedings,—an intelligible

¹ Quincy's *Life of Quincy*, p. 345.

² Josiah Quincy to his wife, Bristol, Jan. 7, 1775 (*Id.*, p. 297).

³ *Id.*, p. 258. The letter is dated London, Dec. 7, 1774.

outline may be had of his connection with its progress. The state papers emanating from this body consist of the petition to the King, a letter to the Assembly of Jamaica, an address to the people of Ireland, and an appeal to the inhabitants of Canada. The last was reported by Jay, Samuel Adams, and Duane. It was written by Jay, the chairman, though the intimate connection of Adams with the measures thus far taken relative to Canada would indicate that his suggestions were followed in the subject-matter. The expedition which Adams and Hancock had assisted to concert against Ticonderoga was now believed to be fairly in progress, and it was doubtless that to which the attention of another committee, appointed on the 15th of May, was directed. It consisted of Washington, Lynch, and Samuel Adams, and the New York delegation, who were to consider what posts were necessary to be occupied in the Colony of New York, and to report as speedily as possible.¹ Before they had fully decided, John Brown, the secret agent whom Adams and Warren had employed during the past winter, arrived, as an express to Congress, with the news of the capture of Ticonderoga by the New England troops. The next day the report was made, and referred to a committee of the whole. The journals are silent as to the recommendations contained in this report, but they were probably connected with the subsequent attempt to conquer Canada, as, soon after, the Provincial Congress of New York was directed to take, among other posts, one at or near Lake George. Following the journals, we find Adams appointed, on the 28th, upon the important service with Washington, Mifflin, Deane, and Morris, "to consider on ways and means to supply the Colonies with ammunition and military stores"; and, on the next, with Franklin, Lynch, Lee, Willing, and Livingston, "to consider the best means of establishing post for conveying letters and intelligence

¹ Journal of Congress, May, 1775.

through the continent.”¹ Franklin was chairman of this last committee; and none were so well qualified as he to arrange a postal system, the details of which were familiar after his long service as Deputy Postmaster of America, from which office he had been removed two years before. He had now lately returned from England, reluctantly convinced, from what he had learned of the ministerial policy, that independence was inevitable. The Committee on Ammunition and Military Stores, after two days, reported their plan, which was referred to a committee of the whole.

On the same day it was resolved that no expedition or incursion ought to be undertaken or made by any Colony or body of Colonists against or into Canada. This was contrary to the advice and earnest wish of Samuel Adams, and probably of most of the New England delegates, but the jealousy which was entertained of them by the wealthy members from the other Colonies, and the tenderness in this respect necessarily exercised, prevented the ardent pressing as yet of any measures of an extreme tendency. The Massachusetts delegation were constantly open to the accusation (industriously fanned by the Loyalist writers, and believed by the more timid and conservative members) of ultra republican sentiments. Samuel Adams was particularly suspected, known as he was to be a man of no fortune, and looked upon in England and America by many as a desperate and artful schemer, who had everything to gain and nothing to lose in any political convulsion. Yet,—to show how ardently the entire Congress was determined to sustain Massachusetts, despite the hesitancy on particular subjects,—

¹ The condition of the post prior to this date is shown by an extract from Curwen's Journal, May 16, 1775. “Philadelphia is wholly American, strong friends to Congressional measures; at least no man is hardy enough to express a doubt of the feasibility of their projects. Mr. Joseph Lee leads a recluse life there. The inhabitants are displeased that the New-Englanders make it their city of refuge. The new-established post (instead of the old eastern one, which is stopped) admits no letters to pass but those franked; the contents of which must be known to one of the Committee, to be entitled to that benefit.”

when Peyton Randolph left the chair, to attend the Virginia Legislature, of which he was a member, John Hancock was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy. The two Adamses were particularly instrumental in securing this election. They saw the policy of placing at the head of Congress the wealthiest man in New England, which would tend to dissipate the idea that only needy adventurers were engaged in the Revolution, while, at the same time, the love of position and popular applause, which was the ruling characteristic of Hancock, would be gratified. The proscription of Adams and Hancock, though not yet published, was known in America as an intended measure ; and Harrison of Virginia, as he conducted the Massachusetts delegate to the chair, said, " We will show Britain how much we value her proscriptions." ¹

While Congress was vacillating between the energetic policy of the North and the counsels of timid members, who still hesitated to indorse the institution of a popular government in Massachusetts, that Colony was anxiously awaiting their consent to such a course, without which the leaders were unwilling to proceed ; and it must have remained in a state bordering upon anarchy, though the military power exercised by the Provincial Congress at Watertown preserved the form of government. The army of New England, however, was suffering for want of a competent leader. Ward, who was Commander-in-Chief, was manifestly unfitted for the position, and yet the removal of a man whose blameless character was universally admitted was a matter of no little delicacy. Joseph Warren, whose extraordinary talents had now brought him to the head of affairs in Massachusetts, and who continued his correspondence with Samuel Adams, wrote to his friend, explaining the condition of the army, and referring to a recent resolve of the Provincial Congress, as an invitation for the continent " to take command of the army, by appointing a Generalissimo."

¹ Bancroft, VII. 378.

The resolution invited the General Congress to "assume the regulation and direction of the army collecting from the different Colonies for the defence of the rights of America." Gerry wrote to the Massachusetts delegation, urging assistance by ammunition and money, and pressing the appointment of a regular general, who should be an American, and not Lee, whose counsels, however, he thought might prove serviceable. He concludes:—

"I should heartily rejoice to see this way the beloved Colonel Washington, and do not doubt the New England generals would acquiesce in showing to our sister Colony, Virginia, the respect which she has before experienced from the continent, in making him Generalissimo. This is a matter in which Dr. Warren agrees with me, and we had intended to write you jointly on the affair."¹

When the appointment of a General-in-Chief came to be discussed among the members in Philadelphia, Hancock was a candidate, though his lack of military knowledge unfitted him for a station to which, considering the immense issues at stake, and the unprecedented and perplexing condition of public affairs, the most consummate abilities and the firmest character might have hesitated to aspire. Mainly through the influence of John Adams, however, upon whom it devolved to bring the subject before Congress, the election of Washington was secured. The wishes of their distinguished friends in Boston, as expressed in letters on this subject, had probably influenced the minds of both the Adamses, though all must have seen that Washington combined every requisite for the great responsibility attaching to the position. A few days after the receipt of those letters, John Adams, after an interview with his kinsman, introduced the subject in Congress, and nominated Washington. The motion was seconded by Samuel Adams, and the great Virginian soon after became the leader of "the American army." This choice was displeasing to Hancock, who had anticipated

¹ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, II. 906.

his own nomination by his colleague. John Adams saw mortification and resentment in his countenance, both that Washington's name was mentioned in preference to his own, and that the motion was seconded by Samuel Adams.¹ A passion for official distinction, however, could not long have overruled his better judgment, when the consummate wisdom and grand character of Washington displayed itself in the gloomiest periods of the Revolution.

Additional forces under Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton had now reached Boston, which, with its garrison, was closely besieged by a New England army of sixteen thousand men, of whom twenty-seven regiments were of Massachusetts. General Gage, thus strengthened, considered it a proper time to carry into effect his long contemplated proclamation of martial law, in which occurred the celebrated proscription of Adams and Hancock. This was issued on the 12th of June, and circulated in the form of handbills. It commences, "By his Excellency, Thomas Gage, Esq., Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over his Majesty's Province of Massachusetts Bay, and Vice-Admiral of the same"; and proceeds to state that "the infuriated multitude, who have long suffered themselves to be conducted by certain well-known incendiaries and traitors, have at length proceeded to open rebellion," leaving it for "those who are intrusted with the supreme rule, as well for the punishment of the guilty as the protection of the well affected, to prove they do not bear the sword in vain." After touching upon the infringements, "too many to enumerate, on the most sacred rights of the crown," and eloquently depicting the lamentable condition of the country, which is attributed to "the authors of the present unnatural revolt," the proclamation proceeds:—

"In this exigency of complicated calamities, I avail myself of the last effort within the bounds of my duty, to spare the effusion of blood, to offer, and I do hereby in his Majesty's name offer and

¹ John Adams's Works, II. 415—417.

promise, his most gracious pardon to all persons who shall forthwith lay down their arms and return to the duties of peaceable subjects: excepting only from the benefit of such pardon SAMUEL ADAMS and JOHN HANCOCK, whose offences are of too flagitious a nature to admit of any other consideration than that of condign punishment."¹

The Governor, by thus proscribing the two prominent characters in the Revolutionary party, only added greater lustre to their deeds. Placed without the bounds of royal clemency, their names became at once the watchwords of American liberty. The King could have conferred no more illustrious title than by thus excepting them from the general pardon, giving them an enviable distinction, and investing the names of Adams and Hancock with undying fame. The proscription was read in England and America with indignation or amazement at the folly of both King and Governor. In Massachusetts it was ridiculed by the people, who thoroughly despised the author of the proclamation, the whole of which was versified in the *Gazette*.² The Tory writers, meantime, lost no opportunity to malign the chief men of the Revolution. This appears in their public appeals in the press, as well as in private correspondence.

¹ Journals of the Provincial Congress, p. 331. Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, II. 969.

² A single verse of this will suffice to show its spirit and style:—

“ But then I must out of this plan lock
Both Samuel Adams and John Hancock,
For those vile traitors (like bedentures)
Must be tucked up at all adventures,
As any proffer of a pardon
Would only tend those rogues to harden.”

Boston Gazette, June 24, 1775.

The proclamation was published by the patriot press, prefaced with the following notice: “The following is a copy of an *infamous thing* handed about here last Tuesday evening, and now reprinted to satisfy the curiosity of the public. As it is replete with consummate impudence, the most abominable lies, and stuffed with daring expressions of tyranny, as well as rebellion against the established constitutional authority, both of Great Britain and of the American States, no one will hesitate in pronouncing it to be the *genuine* production of that perfidious tyrant, Thomas Gage.” — *New England Chronicle*, June 15, 1775.

The picture conveyed in the following extract was probably considered as perfectly reliable by those who read it in England.

“Mr. Washington is just such another character as my Lord Essex, the Parliament’s general in King Charles the First’s time. Putnam may very well be compared to Ireton. Hancock is one of the greatest desperadoes living. Adams generally sleeps with the memoirs of Cardinal Retz under his pillow. The slow and lenient measures of the British government have been interpreted by our rulers into fear.”¹

Whig politicians, however, had better information. They had learned how to estimate the principal Americans, and were not to be misled by the falsehoods of the Loyalists, whose hired pens stopped at no degree of defamation, particularly as regarded Samuel Adams. Him they recognized as the “restless conspirator,” who could never be turned aside, either by threats or bribes, from his purpose of Independence. All the letters of Adams during this Congress reflect his desire to raise the important question, but, among the various elements composing that assemblage, it was equally impossible to effect such a consummation, and dangerous to urge it; still, he saw that the tendency was towards the great object of his wishes, although it was evident the public mind was not prepared for the event. To Mrs. Adams he wrote,² “I wish I could consistently inform you of what is doing here. I can, however, tell you that matters go on, though slower than we could wish, yet agreeable to my mind.” Joseph Warren, as we have seen, had already urged him to press upon Congress the necessity of authorizing Massachusetts to adopt a form of government of her own.

“The matter of taking up government,” said he, in the last letter he ever wrote to his friend, “I think cannot occasion much debate. If the Southern Colonies have any apprehension of the Northern

¹ Letter from a Virginian, Jan. 1776.

² June 17, 1775.

Colonies, they surely must now be for an establishment of *civil* government here; for, as an army is now necessary, or is taking the field, it is obvious to every one, if they are without control, a military government must certainly take place; and I think I cannot see a question with them to determine which is most to be feared, — a military or a civil government.”¹

The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts addressed the General Congress on this subject a day or two after the above letter was written, and on the 9th of June the people of that Colony were advised by the Continental Congress to establish a government. Samuel and John Adams were doubtless the chief movers in this; and, in accordance with that recommendation, Counsellors and Representatives were elected a few weeks later. This result in Congress must have been procured with difficulty, that body having among its members a considerable element of timid Whigs and those who still favored the course of “moderation.” The most powerful of the opponents of all decisive measures continued to be Galloway, whose influence was unremittingly exerted against the policy of the New England members. The journals say that “Congress came into the resolution,” but give no record of the dissentients. The treachery of Galloway was already suspected. Despite the oath of secrecy taken by every member, this man, if not others, proved recreant, and not long after openly violated his word of honor. A letter from London to Samuel Adams, received about this time, says: “Mr. — of New York, and Mr. G——y of Philadelphia, have certainly communicated to administration, through an indirect channel, the secrets of your Congress; therefore, in my opinion, if any decisive measures are intended, or indeed if they are to be deliberated on, an oath of secrecy should be administered.”²

¹ Joseph Warren to Samuel Adams, May 14, 1775.

² Letter from London, April 10, 1775. A writer in New York, who signed himself “The Intelligencer,” transmitted, by letters addressed to Samuel and John Adams, the occurrences in that Colony.

This information was conveyed to Congress, and engaged its attention.

While, in opposition to the sentiment of the North, the proprietary interests in Congress were urging continued intercession with the King, events were fast tending to a crisis in Massachusetts. On the very day when Washington was chosen to command the American army, the Massachusetts Committee of Safety decided to fortify Bunker Hill, and on the 17th of June occurred the memorable battle which proved to the Americans and the world that the Provincial militia was an antagonist quite worthy to cope with the tried veterans of Britain. The joy that must have glowed in the heart of Adams, as he contemplated the grandeur of the contest which had now fairly commenced, and its vast results to his country, was tempered by the sad news of Warren's death. We have already seen the intimate relations existing between Adams and Warren. From 1768, they had sustained each other through all the great movements in Boston, always in consultation, and acting in such harmony that the suggestions of one were often but the counterpart of the other's mind. Their social relations were of the most pleasing kind. The bond of friendship and unreserved confidence was perfect between them, despite the difference in age. A year after the death of Warren, when his eulogy was pronounced at King's Chapel by one who had long personally witnessed their intimacy, the orator feelingly alluded to this. "An Adams," he said, "can witness with how much zeal he loved, where he had formed the sacred connection of a friend. Their kindred souls were so closely twined, that both felt one joy, both one affliction."¹ The daughter of Samuel Adams has often spoken of this friendship, which she loved to recall, and which she illustrated by many anecdotes. Warren was the closest friend that Samuel Adams ever had. No one among his younger associates

¹ Oration by Perez Morton, delivered April 8, 1776, on the reinterment of the remains of Joseph Warren.

in the cause, not even John Adams, ever enjoyed the confidence of Samuel Adams to such an extent as Warren, and that vacancy in his heart was never fully supplied. In January, 1777, he obtained in Congress the appointment of a committee of four to consider what honors were due to the memory of the departed patriot, and it was resolved to erect a monument in Boston, as an acknowledgment of his distinguished merit, and the devotion of his life to the liberties of his country. His eldest son was also to be educated at the national expense. Similar resolutions were, at the same time, adopted in honor of General Mercer. It would be difficult to select from the galaxy of Revolutionary characters any one who combined within himself as did Warren all the elements necessary for the attainment of high position. He seemed proficient in every branch of the public service, and it has been aptly said of him by Bancroft, that, "had he lived, the future seemed burdened with his honors."¹ But thirty-five years of age when he yielded up his life in defence of his country, he would have been in the prime of his remarkable powers at the close of the Revolution; and having already distinguished himself as a writer and in debate, by wisdom of counsel, prudence, and courage, he must have become the popular idol, when, with the return of peace, a grateful people prepared to honor their faithful servants. When that time arrived, Samuel Adams had descended far into the vale of age, having then expended the energies of his mature manhood in a round of continuous labor to which history scarcely affords a parallel. In no letter of Samuel Adams can any allusion be found to the death of Warren. His sorrow was probably of that nature which could find no solace in writing or commenting upon his loss.

Washington, having received his command, prepared for his journey to Massachusetts. We find Samuel Adams one of a committee to prepare proper answers to a series of

¹ Bancroft, VII. 433.

queries which the General had submitted to Congress through Patrick Henry. This was the day before the news of the Charlestown battle. Being now Commander-in-Chief of the army, he was invested with a peculiar dignity of station as well as of character, and none more heartily than Samuel Adams prepared to support him in his position. The relationship between himself and Washington must have been cordial and unreserved, and it devolved upon the Massachusetts members to inform him more particularly of the condition of that Province, and of the people he was going among. On the 23d of June the Commander-in-Chief left Philadelphia, accompanied by the Massachusetts delegation, who, with many others, escorted him beyond the town. Samuel Adams probably furnished him with letters of introduction to the principal men of the Province. Writing to Elbridge Gerry, Adams says:—

“Our patriotic General Washington will deliver this letter to you. The Massachusetts Delegates have jointly given to him a list of the names of certain gentlemen in whom he may place the greatest confidence. Among these, you are one. Major-General Lee and Major Mifflin accompany the General. . . . I regret his leaving this city; but have the satisfaction of believing that he will add great spirit to our army.”¹

A letter to James Warren from Samuel Adams also refers to Washington, with the desire of impressing upon his Massachusetts friends the capabilities and character of the new commander, and of avoiding any jealousies that might arise among those who had been superseded. This letter cannot be found, but Warren’s reply indicates its contents. He says:—

“I feel very, very happy in being able to give you assurances that will relieve an anxiety that I discover in your letter. You may rely on it, no suspicions, no uneasiness prevails at all with regard to our old generals, and everybody seems to be perfectly sat-

¹ Samuel Adams to Elbridge Gerry, June 22, 1775.

isfied with the appointment of the new ones. I mean Washington and Lee. I have not heard a single objection to the last of them. I dined yesterday with General Washington. He is an amiable man, and perfectly answers to the high character you and my friend Adams have given of him. I admire the activity, spirit, and obliging behavior of Mifflin. Colonel Reed is a very sensible gentleman. I know not what to say of your friend Lee. I believe he is a soldier, and a very industrious, active one; he came in just before dinner, drank some punch, said he wanted no dinner, took no notice of the company, mounted his horse, and went off again to the lines. I admire the soldier, but think civility, or even politeness, not incompatible with his character. But this *inter nos*. I shall take care to speak highly of him on all occasions.”¹

The wife of James Warren, after Lee had dined with herself and husband at Watertown, described the General as “plain in his person, to a degree of ugliness; careless, even to impoliteness; his garb, ordinary; his voice, rough; his manners, rather morose; yet sensible, learned, judicious, and penetrating.”² The character of Lee was not yet well understood. His eccentricities were supposed to cover the merits of a patriot soldier, and at a crisis when the Colonies were anxious to obtain able military talent, his pompous, censorious manner, and love of display, rather acted in his favor. The two Adamses were his advocates, and, by their influence especially, Congress was induced to place him second in command to Washington. Samuel Adams had been of the committee appointed to confer with Lee, on the subject “of the estate which he risked, by entering upon the American cause,” and upon their report, so valuable were Lee’s services counted, it was resolved to indemnify him for any loss of property he might sustain.³ His selfishness, utterly at variance with the disinterested course of Washington under the same circumstances, seems to have excited

¹ James Warren to Samuel Adams, July 9, 1775.

² Mrs. Mercy Warren to Samuel Adams (Lossing’s Field-Book, 1855, II. 17).

³ Secret Journal of Congress, June 19, 1775.

no comment at the time, but it might have served as an indication of the base treachery lurking beneath.

The excitement of war in Massachusetts left the delegates in Philadelphia without the usual correspondence from their friends. Only meagre details of the battle at Charlestown had yet reached them, and these came rather by hap-hazard conveyances than by the regular postal or courier system. While in this state of uncertainty, and arduously engaged in his Congressional duties, Adams writes to James Warren :—

“The Messrs. Heath of Maryland are just now arrived here from Cambridge, which place they left on the 22d ultimo. They have brought us but one letter, viz. from our good friend Colonel Palmer. I am glad to hear that the number of killed and wounded on the side of the enemy amounts to so many more than one thousand. I dare say you would not grudge them every hill near you on the same terms. A gentleman of New York, a son of Mr. Philip Livingston, one of the delegates from that place, writes to him that the pilot who brought in the *Nautile*, ship of war, lately from Boston, reports that he heard the officers on board frequently lament the death of General Howe. If this be true, I rejoice in it; for that man deserved to die for his ingratitude.

“Indeed, my friend, your cause suffers here by our not receiving more frequent and particular accounts from you. The delegates from the other three Colonies have better intelligence of what is doing near Boston than your own. We know nothing of the disposition of the army, not even who commanded in the late important engagement. I know your hands are full of business, but may not a committee be appointed to collect and send to us material intelligence? There is a regular post, but we hardly think it worth while to send a servant to the office for letters.

“I have a thousand things to say to you, which I cannot write. Did I not flatter myself we were doing essential service to the common cause, I would not stay here a moment. Some matters are agreed to, and others talked of, which I know you would be pleased with; but let me tell you, that were you here, your patience would be tried. It is not in the power of man to create events; our business is to foresee as far as we are able, and prepare for, and improve

them. It is my opinion, that great ones will be produced in a short time. Perhaps I may not be suffered to live to enjoy them, for I find I have the honor of being publicly proscribed by an infamous traitor. I cannot express to you my contempt for him and his proclamation. It is my fate to be always in a hurry. My love to the circle."¹

Congress, on the 12th of June, had appointed the 20th of July as a day of public humiliation, fasting, and prayer, throughout the Colonies. The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts had named the 13th of the same month for a similar observance. On the 15th, James Warren wrote from Watertown:—

"The town is as still as perhaps it ever was on Sunday. This fast has been observed as you could wish; with that deference to the authority that appointed it; with that devotion that our circumstances require. It is a grand solemnity. Three millions of people on their knees at once, supplicating the aid of Heaven, is a striking circumstance, and a very singular one in America. May the blessings of Heaven follow in answer to our prayers. It gives me great satisfaction to hear your health is better. If Gage's proclamation has contributed to it, as I am told it has, I will, in one instance, acknowledge my obligations to him."²

Having adopted the petition to the King and several addresses, and perfected, as far as was possible, their military and financial measures, the Continental Congress adjourned on the 1st of August to the 5th of September following. The funds for the use of the army in Massachusetts, amounting to five hundred thousand dollars, were sent to General Washington, under the care of the Massachusetts delegation, of whom Samuel and John Adams and Hancock arrived home on the 11th of August.³

¹ Samuel Adams to James Warren, July 2, 1775.

² James Warren to Samuel Adams, July 15, 1775.

³ Boston Gazette, August 14, 1775.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Territory of Massachusetts Bay." — A novel Democratic Government. — Adams joins the Council at Watertown. — His Son, Dr. Samuel Adams, enters the Army as a Surgeon. — Adams elected Secretary of State. — Is Chairman of the new Donation Committee. — Returns to Philadelphia. — His Committee Services in Congress. — He favors the Enlistment of Free Negroes. — Advises that each State should institute its own System of Government preparatory to a General Confederation and Independence. — His Conference with the Transylvania Delegate. — He urges the Building of an American Navy. — Advocates taking the Offensive and fitting out Privateers, if the Petition to the King should be rejected. — Treachery of Dr. Church. — Imprisonment of Mr. Lovell. — Paine's "Common Sense." — Failure of the Expedition to Quebec. — Adams Chief Adviser in the Northern War. — John Adams returns to Massachusetts.

THE third and last Massachusetts Provincial Congress was dissolved on the 19th of July, and the newly elected Representatives and Councillors, forming the General Assembly of the Province, now temporarily known as the "Territory of Massachusetts Bay," met at Watertown on the same day. Suffolk County had already elected for its Representatives Adams, Hancock, Church, and Pitt; but, soon after the commencement of the session, Adams was chosen one of eighteen Councillors.¹ This board was to act as one branch

¹ HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WATERTOWN, July 25, 1775.

GENTLEMEN : —

I am directed by this House to acquaint you that they have elected you members of the Honorable Council for this Colony the current year; and as you are sensible that matters of the greatest importance demand our special attention, we hope you will take your seats at the Council Board as soon as may be consistent with the duties of your present important department.

I am, honorable gentlemen,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

JAMES WARREN.

TO the HONORABLE JOHN HANCOCK, JOHN ADAMS, THOMAS CUSHING, SAMUEL ADAMS,
ROBERT TREAT PAINE.

of the Legislature, and also as an executive power, there being no Governor; and for this purpose the Representatives vested the board with all the authority formerly in the hands of the Governor and Council. This novel but efficient government was in full operation when the Continental delegates arrived from Philadelphia; and Samuel Adams, after passing a few days with his family at Cambridge, entered upon the performance of his duties in the General Assembly. Before leaving Cambridge, he had interviews at headquarters with Washington and the principal officers, when he learned the particulars of the battle at Charlestown and informed himself as to the requirements of the camp.

Here he made such arrangements as were possible for the support of his family. It is likely that some portion of his salary, as a delegate to Congress, was advanced for this purpose by a friend, as fragments of papers leading to such a conclusion are preserved. His son, Dr. Adams, immediately after the battle of Lexington, had engaged as a surgeon in the hospital department, a position which was procured for him by Dr. Warren, with whom he studied medicine. He commenced his services by attending some of those who were wounded at Lexington and Bunker Hill, and soon after, joining a Connecticut regiment as assistant surgeon, was present at the desperate fight at Harlem Plains in September, 1776, where the gallant Colonel Knowlton was killed. He was also at Danbury, Connecticut, when it was burned by the British in 1777, and attended General Wooster until the death of that brave officer, which happened shortly after the battle near Danbury, where he was fatally wounded. General Wooster, who had served in Canada under severe trials and misfortunes, was bitterly attacked in Congress, and as ardently supported by Samuel Adams, who knew his worth and entire devotion to the cause. He was sixty-five years of age when he gave up his life to his country; but the heroism of early manhood still burned within him, and fired a heart whose courage death only could quench. Dr. Ad-

ams remained a few months at or near Danbury on business relating to hospital affairs, and was thence ordered to a similar duty in New York.¹ Mrs. and Miss Adams continued at the house of Francis Wells in Cambridge; their family residence in Boston being now occupied by British officers.

Samuel Adams reached Watertown on the 15th of August, when, upon his entering the Assembly, a precept was issued for the election of another Representative from Boston in his place, and a committee of five waited upon him to the Board, which was then in session. Immediately after joining that body he was elected Secretary of State,² in which capacity his signature appears on numerous state papers. The duties of this office, as indicated by the documents preserved in the public archives, embraced, besides an extensive amount of general business, a record of the financial transactions of the Province and the transcribing of resolves passed in previous Provincial Congresses, which were to be received as full evidence in courts of justice, when authenticated by the Secretary. The position was responsible and arduous, and its requirements, together with the attention necessarily devoted as a Councillor to the multiplicity of affairs constantly coming before the Assembly, must have been a close tax upon the industry of the occupant; but, as usual, he cheerfully assumed the laboring oar, and never wearied in the public service. Remembering his former efficiency as chairman of the Donation Committee from the commencement of the distresses caused by the Port Act, the Assembly now made him chairman of a similar body, appointed by the Board, for the relief of the sufferers, among whom the Committee were authorized to distribute donations, according to their best discretion. Adams continued to act in this capacity for many months, exerting himself even in Philadelphia to procure assistance, which from time to time he forwarded to Boston, either in money or provisions. During the late

¹ See Chap. LX. (1788), note on the commission of Dr. Samuel Adams.

² Boston Gazette, Aug. 28, 1775.

session of the Continental Congress, he had often found occasion to remind his friends, in his letters from Philadelphia, of the necessity of their sending frequent and exact information to the delegates in Congress, and, in the vexatious failure of such intelligence, he then recommended the appointment of a committee in the Provincial Assembly for that purpose. His "good friend Colonel Palmer" had been apparently an exception to this neglect in correspondence. In the present session at Watertown, it would seem that Adams had taken care to provide for future information for himself and colleagues. A resolve, originating in the Council, and passed by the House, appointed Sever, Foster, and Palmer a standing committee to transmit from time to time to the Continental delegates the transactions of the General Court in Massachusetts, as well as all public events which, in the opinion of the committee, it was necessary the delegation should be made acquainted with.¹

The Assembly continued in session until the 24th of August, holding its meetings in the village church, and despatching a wide range of business, embracing a system of public credit and finance, the collecting and distributing of ammunition and army stores, the organizing of a temporary government, and the enlisting and equipping of troops. As there was no Governor to adjourn the Legislature; the House informed the Council, now the sole executive power, of their desire for a recess; and that body voted that the Court should be adjourned to the 20th of September.

The Continental Congress was to meet on the 5th of September, and Samuel Adams, surrendering the office of Provincial Secretary into the hands of his deputy, Perez Morton, took his departure with John Adams and Hancock early in that month, arriving at Philadelphia on the 12th. Congress had met on the 5th, pursuant to their adjournment; but the number present being too few for business, they adjourned until the 13th. The day before the session commenced,

¹ Journal of the Massachusetts Assembly, September, 1775.

Adams wrote to Gerry, who was a member of the Massachusetts General Assembly.

"I arrived in this city," he said, "on the 12th instant, having rode full three hundred miles on horseback, an exercise which I have not used for many years past. I think it has contributed to the establishment of my health, for which I am obliged to my friend, Mr. John Adams, who kindly offered me one of his horses the day after we set off from Watertown.

"I write you this letter, principally to put you in mind of the promise you made me, to give me intelligence of what is doing in our Assembly and the camp. Believe me, sir, it is of great importance that we should be informed of every circumstance of our affairs. The eyes of friends and foes are attentively fixed on our Province; and if jealousy or envy can sully its reputation, you may depend upon it they will not miss the opportunity. It behooves our friends, therefore, to be very circumspect, and, in all their public conduct, to convince the world that they are influenced, not by partial or private motives, but altogether with a view of promoting the public welfare.

"Some of our military gentlemen have, I fear, disgraced us; it is then important that every anecdote that concerns a man of real merit among them, and such I know there are, be improved as far as decency will admit of it to their advantage, and the honor of a Colony, which, for its zeal in the great cause as well as its sufferings, deserves so much of America.

"Until I visited head-quarters at Cambridge, I never heard of the valor of Prescott at Bunker Hill, nor the ingenuity of Knox and Waters, in planning the celebrated works at Roxbury. We were told here that there were none in our camp who understood the business of an engineer, or anything more than the manual exercise of the gun. This we had from great authority, and, for want of more certain intelligence, were obliged at least to be silent. There are many military geniuses at present unemployed and overlooked, who, I hope, when the army is new modelled, will be sought after and enlisted into the service of their country. They must be sought after, for modest merit declines pushing itself into public view."¹

The proprietary interests and some of the Southerners in

¹ Samuel Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Sept. 26, 1775.

Congress were growing still more suspicious of the supposed ulterior designs of the New England members, particularly of the two Adamsses, who embodied most of the active power of the Massachusetts delegation ; and it was doubtless this feeling that underlay the disparaging remarks which Samuel Adams was thus anxious to be able to refute. Every move towards independence was opposed with the whole power of Dickinson, who, in addition to his former prejudice against the Northern members, had taken a dislike to John Adams, owing to a slighting remark contained in some letters which had been intercepted by the British, and published.¹ Dickinson's power was such among the timid and wavering, that it was necessary for a while to preserve harmony, by refraining from a strong opposition to his views, which not even the battle of Bunker Hill and the consequent events had inclined to any measures beyond those of conciliation. Gadsden, the Lees, and a few others, defended the New England members against these distrustful remarks, and, with Henry, were already prepared for a separation.

One of the first subjects occupying the attention of Congress was the scarcity of ammunition, fuel, and general stores for the army at Cambridge, and immediate measures were adopted to supply them ; and, to the end of September, the business was mainly auditing accounts and regulating and supporting the army. The only record of these debates is in the Diary of John Adams, by which it appears that Samuel Adams, on the 23d, moved " for the advancement of a sum from the treasury for Mifflin and Barrell." ² General Washington had already appointed Thomas Mifflin Quartermaster-General of the army ; and it was upon a letter just received from him, making a requisition for military supplies, that the motion was based. Adams appreciated

¹ The name of John Adams, up to this time, had been little known abroad ; and in England some importance was attached to this quarrel, because it was supposed to be between Samuel Adams and Dickinson. *Curwen's Journal*, p. 39.

² John Adams's Works, II. 445.

the extreme embarrassment which Washington labored under, and desired the adoption of active and immediate means of relief. His thoughts were constantly turned towards the seat of war, and he saw the absolute necessity of drawing upon all the resources of the country to preserve the fighting condition of the army. The interest in these details of Congressional business has ceased with the lapse of time; but they illustrate some portion of the active agency of the subject of these pages, especially where no other data have been preserved. At the request of Lynch of South Carolina, Adams read the letter which, apparently, had been directed to him. A debate ensued, which terminated in the success of Samuel Adams's motion; and a committee was appointed to purchase woollen goods to the amount of five thousand pounds sterling, to be placed in the hands of the Quartermaster-General of the army. Samuel Adams also appears in subsequent discussion of questions relating to public expenditures; but it was only on great occasions that he made speeches of considerable length, preferring to act on committees and by correspondence, rather than by engaging in debate.

The letters from Washington, representing to Congress the deplorable state of his army, resulted in the appointment, on the 30th of September, of a committee, consisting of Franklin, Lynch, and Harrison, to repair to the camp to confer with the General and the principal officers as to the most effectual method of supporting and regulating the army. Samuel Adams was one of five to draft instructions for this committee.¹ The result of this commission was a successful scheme, proposed by Franklin, for the enlisting and supplying of a new army of twenty-three thousand men; and new life was infused into military affairs.

Samuel Adams was also on a committee with Harrison, Bullock, Hooper, and Chase, to take into consideration the condition of South Carolina. In that Colony, the wealthy

¹ Journal of Continental Congress, September, 1775.

planters were generally Loyalists, and opposed by their aristocratic birth to the patriot party, which embraced chiefly tradesmen, laborers, and herdsmen, having little in common either in interest or associations with the higher classes of society. The government agents had already commenced enlisting the several Indian tribes against the country people; and the royal Governor was urging the Ministry to employ force against a portion of the sea-coast. To defeat his designs, the fort on James Island was taken without resistance, and was soon garrisoned with five hundred men. The arsenal was seized, and the State put as nearly as possible on a war footing. These proceedings having become known to the British commander at Boston, a squadron was to be despatched to the South Carolina coast, where it was supposed no very serious defence could be made. The committee, who were to report "what in their opinion was necessary to be done," were not long in advising a course which must have suited the most determined. Gordon, referring to their deliberations, says: "What this opinion would be was easily foreseen, from Messrs. Chase and Samuel Adams being of the committee."¹ Chase, who has been called "the Samuel Adams of Maryland," was in all respects qualified to act with his New England friend in any matter requiring resolute measures. The report, which was brought in on the following day, recommended the raising and supporting of an army at the Continental expense, for the defence of South Carolina, and another to be raised in Georgia for the defence of that Colony. A number of regulations, relative to the creation of officers for these forces, were submitted. The Council of Safety of South Carolina were authorized to seize or destroy any ship or vessel of war, if deemed necessary for the security of the Colony, and to erect batteries and fortifications at or near Charleston. The Convention of South Carolina was also recommended to establish a form of government, if it was found necessary,

¹ Gordon's American Revolution, II. 151.

and, with that view, to call a full and free representation of the people. The last royal Assembly ever held in that Colony had been dissolved in September, when the Governor took refuge on board a war vessel at anchor in the harbor. The same advice, in relation to the establishment of a local government, had already been given to New Hampshire, when the wanton destruction of Falmouth was known.

Lord Dunmore's military operations against Virginia gave rise to a committee of which Samuel Adams was a member, with Lynch, Wilson, Ward, and Johnson, to consider what provisions were necessary for the defence of that Colony.¹ While the subject was under consideration, the affairs at Hampton Roads and Great Bridge took place; and hostilities having been commenced by the British, there no longer remained any room for doubt, even among those who had hesitated until then. On the 4th of December, the committee, having had additional letters referred to them on the subject, reported through Samuel Adams, their chairman, a series of resolutions, which were adopted after some debate. It was recommended to march troops, already raised in Pennsylvania, into Virginia, for its protection in those parts where hostilities had commenced. The utmost resistance to Dunmore's arbitrary government was advised, and, as the British Governor had proclaimed martial law, thereby tearing up the foundation of civil authority and government in Virginia, the Convention of that Colony was recommended to call a free and full representation, and establish such a form of government as, in their judgment, would best produce the happiness of the people.² Adams was anxious to extend the active denial of British authority North and South,³ and particularly in the New England Col-

¹ Journal of Congress, November, 1775. Gordon makes special mention of Samuel Adams's association with this committee, as if he had in mind some particular information of his agency in the policy recommended. Gordon's American Revolution, II. 151.

² Journal of Congress.

³ Compare letter of Samuel Adams to Dr. Cooper, April 30, 1776.

onies, which he knew must give a strong bias and tone to the rest. Before leaving Massachusetts to join this Congress, he had consulted with his colleagues as to the necessity of establishing a local government in that Colony. Together with John Adams and others, he ardently favored this project, and, from the time the letter from the Provincial Congress was received, he labored for its accomplishment. While the subject was under consideration, he wrote to James Warren, expressing the hope that the newly elected Assembly of his native Province would proceed at once to pass wholesome regulations and laws, and particularly to guard the places of public trust from bad men, who would assume to be patriots for the sake of obtaining them. He says, in continuation : —

“After every other consideration, virtue is the surest means of securing the state. Our brave ancestors laid an excellent foundation for the establishment and perfecting of virtuous principles in the country, when they erected a public seminary of learning even before they had cut down the woods in Cambridge; and they early made laws for the support of common schools. A better foundation could no man lay. I hope you will improve the golden opportunity which you now have of restoring the ancient purity of manners in our country. Everything that we esteem valuable depends on it; for freedom or slavery, says an admired writer, will prevail in a country according as the disposition and manners of the inhabitants render them fit for the one or the other. . . . I am of opinion that it will not be long before every Colony will see the necessity of setting up governments within themselves, for reasons that appear to me to be obvious.”¹

Among the papers of Adams are letters from correspondents in England, written in September of this year, giving him full information of the intentions of government. One of these is very long and ably expressed, and contains internal evidence of having been written by some person well versed in the secrets of administration. It has a fictitious

¹ Samuel Adams to James Warren, Oct. 29, 1775.

direction and signature, and no clew can be obtained by which to ascertain the authorship. It commences: "My very worthy friend,— and surely in these degenerate times I may call him worthy who has so much the true principles of liberty in him, that he is determined to run all risks to prevent the hideous visage of slavery from appearing in the streets which have been so long dedicated to the constitutional principles of virtue and freedom."¹

In the month of July of the previous year, the Continental Congress had adopted a series of resolutions reported by a committee then appointed to devise means for putting the militia of the several Colonies into a proper state for the defence of America. It was resolved, after considerable debate, that all officers above the rank of captain should be appointed by the respective Provincial Assemblies or Conventions, and that wherever a militia had been formed under regulations approved by the Convention or Assembly of such Colony, it should be left to their discretion either to adopt the resolutions of Congress in this respect or continue their own.² In Massachusetts, a contention arose, during October, between the Council and House of Representatives, as to which of those bodies had the right to appoint military officers; and as they were unable to decide the dispute, a special messenger was despatched to Philadelphia by the Board, with letters to each of their delegates, desiring to know the opinions of Congress on the subject. Hancock and Cushing by a joint letter replied in favor of submitting the question to Congress. Samuel and John Adams each advised against such a course, and recommended the Council to give up the point in dispute with the House. The letter of the Board was from James Otis, the father of the celebrated patriot. Samuel Adams replied:—

"Having very maturely considered your letter of the 11th of November, written in the name and by order of the Honorable the

¹ Anonymous letter to Samuel Adams, dated London, Sept. 27, 1775.

² Journal of Congress, July 18, 1775.

Council of Massachusetts Bay, and directed to the delegates of that Colony, I beg leave to offer it as my opinion that the resolve of Congress passed on the 9th of July last must be superseded by the subsequent resolve of the 18th of July following, so far as they appear to militate with each other. By the last of these resolves, the Conventions or Assemblies of the several Colonies annually elective are at their discretion either to adopt the measures therein pointed out for the regulation of their militia, either in whole or in part, or to continue their former regulations, as they, on consideration of all circumstances, shall think fit. It therefore seems to me manifest, that the Honorable Council are under no restraint from yielding to the Honorable House a voice with them in the choice of the militia officers in the Colony. I am prevailed upon to believe that this is the sense of the Congress, because they have lately recommended it to the Colony of New Hampshire, to set up and exercise government in such form as they shall judge to be most conducive to the promotion of peace and good order among themselves, without laying them under restrictions of any kind.

“As the Honorable Board have been pleased to direct us to give our opinion, *with* or *without* consulting our brethren of the Congress, I hope I shall be justified, after having conferred with my colleagues on the subject, in declining on my part to have the matter laid before Congress, for reasons which were of weight in my mind. And, indeed, I am of opinion that the Congress would not choose to take any order of that kind, they having divers times of late declined to determine on matters which concerned the internal police of individuals of the United Colonies. It is my most ardent wish that a cordial agreement between the two Houses may ever exist, more especially in the establishment of the militia, upon which the safety of the Colony so greatly depends.”¹

Seeing the diversity of opinion in Congress on the subject of independence, and the uncertainty of arriving speedily at the desired result, even while the whole country was in arms, and the best blood of America had been shed, Adams resolved that, should circumstances require it, he would endeavor to secure a separate confederation of the New

¹ Samuel Adams to James Otis, Nov. 23, 1775.

England Colonies, as an example to the rest, and trust to their gradual acquiescence,—so determined and resolute was this inflexible man to arrive, over all obstacles, at the great goal of independence. As yet, however, this project remained locked in the recesses of his own mind, and it was not divulged until the commencement of the approaching year. In case it should become necessary to put this plan in execution, it was advisable to have the New England forces remain under the control of their respective Legislatures, until, at least, the question of a separation from Britain should be finally decided in the affirmative. Writing to Elbridge Gerry, on the subject of the Massachusetts militia, Adams says:—

“You tell me that a committee of both Houses is appointed to bring in a militia bill. I am of your opinion, that this matter requires great attention, and I wish, with you, to see our militia formed, not only into battalions, but also brigades. But should we not be cautious in putting them under the direction of generals of the continent, at least until such a legislative shall be established all over America as every Colony shall consent to?

“The Continental army is very properly under the direction of the Continental Congress. Possibly if ever such a legislative should be formed, it may be proper that the whole military power in every Colony should be under its absolute direction. Be that as it may, will it not, till then, be prudent that the militia of each Colony should be and remain under the sole direction of its own legislative, which is, and ought to be, the sovereign and uncontrollable power within its own limits or territory? I hope our militia will always be prepared to aid the forces of the continent in this righteous opposition to tyranny. But this ought to be done upon an application to the government of the Colony. Your militia is your natural strength, which ought, under your own direction, to be employed for your own safety and protection. It is the misfortune of a Colony to become the seat of war. It is always dangerous to the liberties of the people to have an army stationed among them over which they have no control. There is at present a necessity for it; the Continental army is kept up within our Colony most evidently

for our immediate security. But it should be remembered, that history affords abundant instances of established armies making themselves the masters of those countries which they were designed to protect. There may be no danger of this at present, but it should be a caution not to trust the whole military strength of a Colony in the hands of commanders independent of its established legislative.

“It is now in the power of our Assembly to establish many wholesome laws and regulations which could not be done under the former administration of government. Corrupt men may be kept out of places of public trust. The utmost circumspection, I hope, will be used in the choice of men for public officers. It is to be expected that some who are void of the least regard to the public will put on the appearance and even speak boldly the language of patriots, with the sole purpose of gaining the confidence of the public and securing the loaves and fishes for themselves, or their sons, or other connections. Men who stand candidates for public posts should be critically traced in their views and pretensions, and, though we would despise mean and base suspicion, there is a degree of jealousy which is absolutely necessary in this degenerate state of mankind, and is indeed at all times to be considered as a public virtue. It is in your power, also, to prevent a plurality of places incompatible with each other being vested in the same person. This our patriots have loudly and very justly complained of in time past, and it will be an everlasting disgrace to them if they suffer the practice to continue. Care, I am informed, is taking to prevent the evil with as little inconvenience as possible; but it is my opinion that the remedy ought to be deep and thorough.”¹

Intelligence that Dr. Church had proved a traitor to the cause of which he had been generally esteemed one of the most ardent supporters had already reached Philadelphia, where the culprit had lately been received in Congress, on public business, from the General Court in Massachusetts, and was intrusted with important commissions. Involved in debt, and for some years past entertaining strong doubts of the success of the opposition to Parliamentary measures in the Colonies, he had at one time secretly

¹ Samuel Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Oct. 29, 1775.

employed his very able pen on the government side, and as the prospect seemed to grow more gloomy, he had yielded to the bribes held out to tempt his cupidity, and for several months he had been in secret correspondence with the enemy. His genial manners and consummate art long enabled him to avoid detection. He enjoyed the unlimited confidence of the patriot leaders, mingled with them both at Philadelphia and in Massachusetts, and was thoroughly versed in all their secrets. These he did not hesitate to divulge to the enemy by letters written in cipher, and sent by a variety of ingenious methods; but a portion of his correspondence having been intercepted and deciphered by Elbridge Gerry, he was imprisoned, and disgraced forever in the eyes of his country. He was examined before the House of Representatives in his native Province, and, probably, only the distinguished services rendered his country in times past prevented his execution. His own letters indicate his constant trepidation and fear of discovery, even after all his precautions of secret agents and cipher-writing. One of the letters in his possession when arrested, written to him by a Loyalist in Boston, thus alludes to Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and Dr. Warren:—

“I have often told you what the dreams of your high-flaming sons would come to. Do you forget my repeated cautions not to make yourself too obnoxious to government? What says the Psalm-singer and Johnny Dupe to fighting British troops now?¹ They are at Philadelphia, I suppose, plotting more mischief, where I hear your high mightiness has been ambassador extraordinary. Take care of your nob, Mr. Doctor; remember your old friend, the

¹ This allusion to Adams as the “Psalm-singer” has reference to his having often assisted in the choir of the New South Church. Several of his contemporaries speak of the pleasure he experienced in music, especially of a sacred character. John Adams, in a letter to William Tudor (April 15, 1817), refers to the “charming voice” of his kinsman, “when he chose to exercise it”; and Everett, in his Lexington Oration (April 19, 1835), speaks of music as having been the only relaxation of the patriot. He was always deeply impressed with the solemn and inspiring influences of fine church music.

orator ; he will preach no more sedition. Ally joins me in begging you will come to Boston. You may depend upon it, government is determined to crush this rebellion. . . . You see Hancock and Adams are attainted already." ¹

Church was only saved from death at the hands of his country, to have his existence blotted out on the lonely ocean. Whether the vessel in which he was allowed to sail for the West Indies became a prey to the enemy, or was destroyed by pirates, or went down amid the roar of the elements, is a secret which remains with the great deep.

During this session, Samuel Adams was appointed on a committee with Deane and Duane, to report an answer to letters received from the Provincial Congress of New York. These letters related to the fortifications commanding the passages to the Hudson, and probably asked for instructions as to what course further to pursue. The resolution in answer called for the immediate raising of troops for the defence of the Hudson River, and to occupy with such forces the fortifications then erecting on the Highlands. In whatever committee of this nature Adams served, the report had but one object, — the instant organization of effective means for fighting. He was impatient of delay, and longed to reach the point from which, once gained, there could be no retreat. His own fate, under any circumstances, was sealed. Proscribed, and hopelessly beyond the possibility of pardon, he placed his trust in an overruling Providence, and, fearless of adverse results, urged with all prudent eagerness the crossing of the Rubicon of American liberty.

The number of applications for official position in the army at last made it requisite that a committee should be appointed, consisting of one delegate from each Colony, to receive them, and examine into the qualifications of the candidates. Samuel Adams was chosen to represent Massachusetts, and thenceforth had a voice in the selection of every military man who came forward for position. This

¹ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, III. 1482.

must have tasked to the utmost the discrimination and judgment of the committee,¹ whose decision was probably final with Congress. The scenes at the examination of applicants would form a feature in Revolutionary history, had they been preserved. To repeat the words of Samuel Adams, "there were many military geniuses unemployed, who, upon the remodelling of the army, were to be sought after and invited into the service of their country." "For," said he, "modest merit declines pushing itself into public view." He was equally solicitous that proper men should be appointed to office in his native Province, under the new government. Writing to Gerry on this subject, in answer to a letter written at Watertown, he says:—

"Whatever kind of men may be denominated enemies to their country, certainly he is a very injudicious friend to it who gives his suffrage for any man to fill a public place merely because he is rich; and yet you can tell me there are recent instances of this in our government. I confess it mortifies me greatly. The giving such a preference to riches is both dishonorable and dangerous to a government. It is, indeed, equally dangerous to promote a man to a place of public trust only because he wants bread; but I think it is not so dishonorable; for men may be influenced to the latter from the feelings of humanity, but the other argues a base, degenerate, servile temper of mind. I hope our country will never see the time when either riches or the want of them will be the leading considerations in the choice of public officers."²

Another subject of importance, in which Samuel Adams took a deep and abiding interest, was the commencement of an American navy. Early in October, the Rhode Island members had presented to Congress instructions from the Assembly of that Colony, directing them to use their whole influence for the building of a fleet at the Continental expense, for the protection of the Colonies.³ When this came

¹ Their reports appear as those of the "Committee on Qualifications."

² Samuel Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Jan. 2, 1776.

³ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, IV. 1838.

up for discussion, it was opposed by Zubley, Rutledge, Paine, and others; and the thought of building an American fleet was denounced by Chase, as "the maddest thing in the world."¹ The project, however, was defended by John and Samuel Adams and the Rhode Island delegates. Towards the close of November, a naval code, drafted by John Adams, was adopted, and to him probably more than to any other member is due the credit of having brought this important matter to so fortunate a conclusion. Governor Ward wrote home about this time that Dr. Franklin, Colonel Lee, the two Adamses, and many others, would support the project of an American fleet.² Though little remains by which to associate Samuel Adams with the success of the project, there are evidences that his potent influence was exerted in its favor, while John Adams was its chief advocate in debate. It appears, by the journals, that on the 11th of December, Samuel Adams was the representative of Massachusetts in a committee consisting of one from each Colony, "to devise ways and means for furnishing the Colonies with a naval armament"; and soon after they reported a plan for the fitting out of thirteen ships, carrying from twenty-four to thirty-two guns, to be got ready in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.³ They recommended Congress to direct the most speedy and effectual measures for importing the requisite canvas and gunpowder, for which purpose a committee was appointed on the following day. Samuel Adams was zealous in the prosecution of a scheme which would tend to render the coming nation as potent on the seas as his constant aim had been to make her in military force.

Following the Diary of John Adams, kept during this session of Congress, which occasionally notices the names of the Massachusetts delegates, an idea may be obtained of

¹ John Adams's Works, II. 463.

² Life of S. Ward, in Sparks's American Biography, XIX. 316.

³ Journals of Congress, Dec. 11 and 13, 1775.

their manner of living. They probably occupied lodgings together, the two Adamses as usual visiting their acquaintances in company, preserving their old friendship, and consulting together upon most of their plans of public policy. On the 18th of September, they called upon the Maryland gentlemen at Mrs. Bedford's, where they met and enjoyed a social evening with Paca and Chase. On the 20th, the writer makes note of a walk in company with Governor Ward, Mr. Gadsden and son, and Samuel Adams, to a little box in the country, belonging to Christopher Marshall, where, with their host, they drank coffee, and spent the afternoon in free conversation. There are also notices of visits at Mrs. Yard's (their landlady's) from Dr. Rush, Gordon the historian, who was then collecting materials for his work, Bullock and Houston of Georgia, Langdon Hewes, and others. An evening interview is also alluded to, and the policy of Samuel Adams indicated on the question as to when offensive warfare should commence on the part of the Colonies. It also shows that, as far back as September in this year, his mind was conclusively made up regarding naval operations, which appear to have been so hotly debated early in October.

"In the evening," says John Adams, "Mr. Bullock and Mr. Houston, two gentlemen from Georgia, came into our room, and smoked and chatted the whole evening. Houston and Adams disputed the whole time in good humor. They are both dabs at disputation, I think. Houston, a lawyer by trade, is one of course, and Adams is not a whit less addicted to it than the lawyers. The question was, whether all America was not in a state of war, and whether we ought to confine ourselves to act upon the defensive only. He was for acting offensively next spring or this fall, if the petition was rejected or neglected. If it was not answered, and favorably answered, he would be for acting against Britain and Britons as in open war against French and Frenchmen; fit privateers, and take their ships anywhere."¹

¹ John Adams's Works, II. 428.

Such a decisive policy Samuel Adams was eventually to advocate alone for a while among the delegates of his native Province. There is evidence, however, that this determined energy was not urged beyond the bounds of discretion, so long as a reasonable hope remained of a favorable reception of the late petition to the King. He had been opposed to drafting or sending any such petition. He believed that the cup of bitterness was full to overflowing, and that enough had been seen of the temper of Administration to convince an unprejudiced mind of the hopelessness of renewed petitioning; but the majority prevailed, and it would have been hazardous for the suspected "desperate" members from Massachusetts to oppose it. This happy blending of sagacious policy with inflexible fixedness of purpose was a distinguishing characteristic of Samuel Adams, of whom the historian has aptly said, "His vigorous, manly will resembled in its tenacity well-tempered steel, which may ply a little, but will not break."¹ It is illustrated by an incident occurring about this time. The Proprietors of the Transylvania purchase on the south side of the Ohio, having erected their community into a Colony, met for the purposes of legislation, and deputed James Hogg, Esq., to apply for admission as a delegate to represent them in the Continental Congress. The deputy arrived in Philadelphia late in October, and, two months later, writing back to the Proprietors an account of his embassy, he says:—

"In a few days they introduced me to several of the Congress gentlemen, among the first of whom were accidentally the famous Samuel and John Adams; and as I found their opinion friendly to our new Colony, I showed them our map, explained to them the advantage of our situation, &c., &c. They entered seriously into the matter, and seemed to think favorably of the whole; but the difficulty that occurred to us soon appeared to them. 'We have petitioned and addressed the King,' said they, 'and have entreated him to point out some mode of accommodation. There seems to be an

¹ Bancroft, V. 194. John Adams's Works, II. 430.

impropriety in embarrassing our reconciliation with anything new ; and the taking under our protection a body of people who have acted in defiance of the King's proclamations will be looked on as a confirmation of that independent spirit with which we are daily reproached.' I showed them our memorial, to convince them that we did not pretend to throw off our allegiance to the King, but intended to acknowledge his sovereignty whenever he should think us worthy of his regard. They were pleased with our memorial, and thought it very proper ; but another difficulty occurred. By looking at the map, they observed that we were within the Virginia charter. I told them of the fixing their boundaries which had passed at Richmond in March last, and that I had reason to believe that the Virginians would not oppose us ; however, they advised me to sound the Virginians, as they would not choose to do anything in it without their consent. All the delegates were at that time so much engaged in the Congress from morning to night, that it was some days before I got introduced to the Virginians."¹

This interview is briefly referred to by John Adams in his Diary : —

"Last evening, Mr. Hewes of North Carolina introduced to my namesake and me a Mr. Hogg from that Colony, one of the Proprietors of Transylvania, — a late purchase from the Cherokees upon the Ohio. He is an associate with Henderson (who was lately one of the Associate Judges of North Carolina), who is President of the Convention in Transylvania. These proprietors have no grant from the Crown, nor from any Colony, are within the limits of Virginia and North Carolina by their charters, which bound those Colonies in the South Sea. They are charged with republican notions and Utopian schemes."

It was during the month of December, that the brave General Montgomery, between whom and Samuel Adams a mutual friendship had sprung up within a year, based upon the qualities of each as statesman and soldier, had led the unfortunate attack upon Quebec, after having exhibited remarkable judgment and skill in the capture of St. Johns, Chambly,

¹ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, IV. 544.

and Montreal. His death before Quebec was considered by Adams as a great public calamity, and the failure of the expedition of which he had been the chief adviser and advocate put a sad damper upon a scheme for the acquisition of the Northeastern Provinces, on which he had set his heart for more than a year. Long before the outbreak of hostilities, he had concerted plans with Dr. Warren for such a consummation, and, as we have seen, had despatched a secret agent into Canada for information on which to base future operations, which, but for the death of Montgomery, would ultimately have been carried out. The letters of Adams, on this subject, occasionally reveal his chagrin at the failure, and show how much his plans for the coming greatness of his country had been founded on the conquest of Canada, and the securing of the immense fishing and maritime interest of that region.

Early in December, John Adams left Philadelphia for Massachusetts, and did not resume his position in Congress for near two months. Cushing followed him about the middle of January, leaving Samuel Adams the sole champion of measures tending towards independence in the delegation of his native Province. Cushing and Paine, both patriotic public servants, were neither of them prepared for the extreme event for which Adams had so long labored.¹ Hancock, occupying the Presidential chair of Congress, affiliated with aristocratic members from other Colonies rather than with his democratic colleagues. Cushing and Paine were equally opposed to any policy which might seem to aim at independence. Though supported by a few, Adams met with opposition from a large number among the Central and Southern delegates.

On the 8th of January appeared Paine's celebrated pamphlet, "Common Sense," which was at first ascribed by many to the pens of both John and Samuel Adams.² With the latter, not long after his arrival in America, Paine had

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 242.

² John Adams's Works, II. 507.

cultivated an acquaintance, as also with Franklin, Rittenhouse, Clymer, and Rush, to whom he showed his production previous to its publication. Samuel Adams saw instantly the singular ability of the essay, and now esteemed the author "as a warm friend to the liberty and lasting welfare of the human race." Almost the dying words of the venerable Adams, when, in the next century, he defended Christianity against the sophistry of Paine, were in testimony that "Common Sense" and "The Crisis" "undoubtedly awakened the public mind, and led the people loudly to call for a declaration of independence."¹

An instance of the sense of justice which always actuated Samuel Adams, as well as his readiness to assist a friend in distress, when compatible with the public service, occurred early in this month. Among the firm adherents to the patriot cause in Boston, from the commencement, was James Lovell, the celebrated schoolmaster, and son of the equally famous and now aged John Lovell, master of the South Grammar School, under whom Adams and many of his contemporaries had prepared for college. In the previous summer, the younger Lovell had been arrested and imprisoned by the British in Boston, charged with being "a spy and giving intelligence to the rebels." After suffering every indignity and deprivation, and in vain soliciting a trial for the pretended crime, he succeeded in sending secretly two letters to General Washington at Cambridge, representing his case. He had been informed by the British officers that he might be exchanged as a prisoner of war for Colonel Skene, late Lieutenant-Governor of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, who had been captured by Captain Herrick in the expedition against Skenesborough. The generous, self-sacrificing spirit of Lovell appears in his letter to Washington.

"This proposition," he writes, "appears to me extremely disgraceful to the party from which it comes, and a compliance with it would be pregnant with dangerous consequences to my fellow-citi-

¹ Samuel Adams to Thomas Paine, Nov. 30, 1802.

zens. But while my own spirit prompts me to reject it directly with the keenest disdain, the importunity of my distressed wife, and the advice of some whom I esteem, have checked me down to a consent to give your Excellency this information. I have the fullest confidence in your wisdom, and I shall be perfectly resigned to your determination, whatever it may be. I must not, however, omit to say that, should you condescend to stigmatize this proceeding of my enemies by letter, the correction might work some change in favor of myself, or at least of my family, which must, I think, perish through want of fuel and provision in the approaching winter, if it continues to be deprived of my assistance.”¹

Washington, struck with the magnanimity of the sufferer, and aware of his abilities and value in the public counsels, mentioned the subject in one of his letters to Congress. “I am sensible,” he continues, “of the impropriety of exchanging a soldier for a citizen; but there is something so cruelly distressing in regard to this gentleman, that I dare say you will take it under your consideration.” This letter, among others, was referred to a committee of which Samuel Adams was a member.² In one of his letters to James Warren, he casually alludes to this subject: —

“A few days ago, being one of a committee to consider General Washington’s letters to Congress, I proposed to the committee, and they readily consented, to report the enclosed resolutions, which were unanimously agreed to in Congress. The committee reported that a certain sum should be paid to Mr. — out of the military chest, towards enabling him to remove himself and family from Boston.”³

The report, as published in the journals of Congress, is as follows: —

“The committee appointed to consider the letter of General Washington, dated the 18th of December, and the enclosed papers, brought in a report upon that part which relates to James Lovell, who has long been, and still is, detained a close prisoner in Boston,

¹ Force’s American Archives, Fourth Series, IV. 314, 315.

² Journals of Congress, Dec. 30, 1775.

³ Samuel Adams to James Warren, Jan. 10, 1776.

by order of General Howe, which, being taken into consideration, was agreed to, and is as follows :—

“That it appears to your committee that the said Mr. Lovell hath for years past been an able advocate for the liberties of America and mankind ; that by his letter to General Washington, which is a part of said enclosed papers, he exhibits so striking an instance of disinterested patriotism, as strongly recommends him to the particular notice of this continent.

“Whereupon, *Resolved*, That Mr. James Lovell, an inhabitant of Boston, now held a close prisoner there by order of General Howe, has discovered under the severest trials the warmest attachment to public liberty, and an inflexible fidelity to his country ; that by his late letter to General Washington he has given the strongest evidence of disinterested public affection, in refusing to listen to terms offered for his relief, till he could be informed by his countrymen that they were compatible with their safety and honor.

“*Resolved*, That it is deeply to be regretted that a British general can be found degenerate enough, so ignominiously and cruelly to treat a citizen who is so eminently virtuous.

“*Resolved*, That it be an instruction to General Washington to make an offer of Governor Skene in exchange for the said Mr. Lovell and his family.

“*Resolved*, That General Washington be desired to embrace the first opportunity which may offer of giving some office to Mr. Lovell equal to his abilities, and which the public service may require.

“*Ordered*, That a copy of the foregoing resolutions be transmitted to the General as speedily as possible.”¹

These efforts, however, were unavailing. Washington notified Howe of the intention of Congress, and proposed to exchange Mr. Skene, but the British General declined the offer, having, as he said in his reply, discovered a prohibited correspondence by Mr. Lovell,—alluding probably to his letters to Washington,—which deprived him of the liberty he had fully intended to give him.² The prisoner, therefore, remained in the hands of the British, and when,

¹ Journals of Congress, Jan. 5, 1776.

² Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, IV. 975.

a few months later, they were compelled to evacuate Boston, Lovell was taken with them to Halifax, where he was kept for a long time in confinement. His father, who was as determined a Loyalist as the son was a Patriot, accompanied the British forces in their flight, and both were in Halifax at the same time. James, after his release, returned to Boston, and was elected a member of Congress. The father died at Halifax in 1778.¹

At the outbreak of hostilities, free negroes had been enlisted in the Provincial army, and were retained there, although Edward Rutledge and a few others had attempted in the fall of the last year to compel their discharge. A committee, consisting of Franklin, Harrison, and Lynch, who were at camp in October, had decided in a conference with Washington to exclude them.² They had not the power to do so, for Congress was virtually the supreme authority in military as well as civil matters. Washington, dissatisfied with this measure, and being desirous of retaining the aid of these men, referred the subject to Congress, who, on the 15th of January, appointed a committee consisting of Wythe, Samuel Adams, and Wilson, to pass upon its merits. On the following day they reported "that the free negroes who had served faithfully in the army at Cambridge might be re-enlisted therein, but no others."³ This decision was indorsed, and free negroes thenceforth, during the war, served in the ranks in defence of American liberty.

The journals show that Samuel Adams was generally placed upon committees appointed to consider the letters of Washington, who was continually writing in relation to the requirements of his army. Whenever these letters can be definitely connected with the action of Congress through committees including Adams among their number, the recommendations are invariably a speedy indorsement of the General's advice, and a cordial activity is displayed in

¹ Sabine's *American Loyalists*, p. 429.

² Bancroft, VIII. 233.

³ *Journals of Congress*, II. 24-27.

carrying it into practice. He was engaged upon committees relating to the war in the North. The report on this subject, after the consideration of General Schuyler's letter to Congress, recommends immediate and active measures for the reinforcement of the army in Canada. Jefferson remembered Samuel Adams as the chief adviser and director in the Northern war, and that recollection tallies with the known policy of Adams, as exhibited hitherto in his letters, and by his active measures for the prosecution of hostilities in Canada.¹ The recent disaster at Quebec produced an effect upon Adams similar to that caused by political reverses in the earlier years of the struggle. Defeat of any kind only nerved him to greater exertions. It had always been his fate to battle with difficulties; but he was one who could face the storm, and his cheerful disposition generally enabled him to see the sunshine long before it warmed the hearts of others. The letter referred to this committee brought the intelligence of Montgomery's death, and with it enclosures from General Wooster, Colonel Arnold, and others. The committee, consisting, besides Adams, of Lynch, Wythe, Sherman, and Ward, proposed the sending of a portion of Washington's troops with all possible speed into Canada, the raising of additional battalions for a similar destination, with bounties for recruits; while the several Committees of Safety were urged to hasten the movement in each Colony. Washington was desired to despatch a general officer to take command of the army in Canada. Gunpowder was forwarded by the secret committee, and from Connecticut blank commissions were issued for officers, to be filled up with such names as the Colonial Conventions or Committees of Safety should judge proper; and the President of Congress was directed to send an express to General Schuyler, informing him of the measures Congress had taken for the defence of Canada, and desiring him to forward the same to General

¹ Randolph's Life of Jefferson, I. 5. Letter to S. A. Wells, May 12, 1819.

Wooster,¹ who was now at Montreal, but afterwards took command in Canada. But the arrival of strong reinforcements to the British army eventually forced the Americans to give up their design of adding Canada to the United Colonies, and, post after post being successively evacuated, the Northern expedition was for the time abandoned.

The intended descent by the enemy upon the Southern coast having been discovered by means of intercepted letters sent to Congress by Washington late in December, Adams was chosen on a committee with Lynch, Hooper, Wythe, and Deane, to consider what measures were necessary to be adopted. On New-Year's Day, they reported a series of resolutions, recommending the Provincial Congress of Georgia and North Carolina to send committees at once to Charleston, there to confer with the Committee of Safety of South Carolina "upon weighty and important matters, relative to the defence and security of those Colonies"; and, in view of the meditated attack, the Southern Colonies were exhorted to make a vigorous defence, for which purpose the several Committees of Safety in that part of the continent were advised to consult upon a plan of operations.² The attack was made during the next month, and the barbarities of the British troops, instead of subduing the spirit of the people, only the more strongly confirmed the patriot party in their determined opposition. In burning and laying waste Norfolk, Dunmore, as Samuel Adams afterwards said, "had done little more than exasperate the Virginians, and convinced that brave Colony that they could be formidable to savages on the east as well as on the west side of their dominion."

Again, with Wythe and Ward, we find Adams deputed to take into consideration letters from Washington, Lord Sterling, and others. The communication from the Commander-in-Chief related to the defeat of the American forces in Can-

¹ Journals of Congress, Jan. 20, 1776.

² Journals of Congress, Dec. 30, 1775, and Jan. 1, 1776.

ada and the death of Montgomery; and it seems that, in applying to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire for troops to be sent with all speed to the northward, Washington had acted simultaneously with the recommendation of the Congressional committee. His proceedings were heartily indorsed by the committee now appointed, and pronounced "prudent, consistent with his duty, and a further manifestation of his commendable zeal for the good of his country."¹ Adams also made one of a committee of seven, including Lynch, Franklin, Rutledge, Harrison, Ward, and Morris, to consider the propriety of establishing a Board of War, and the powers with which the office should be invested.² Their report did not appear until later in the session, when the office was established under a system of regulations arranged by this committee; and Samuel Adams, in January of the following year, was added to the Board by special election. The duties of this department were similar to those of the subsequent War Office at Washington, and involved a heavy amount of labor and responsibility.

¹ Jan. 25, 1776.

² Jan. 24, 1776.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The King rejects the Petition of Congress, and seeks to employ Mercenary Troops against the Colonies. — Indignation of Adams. — His Public Writings in favor of an immediate Declaration of Independence. — Wilson and a strong Party in Congress disavow Independence. — Adams rallies the bolder Members. — The other Massachusetts Delegates side with Wilson, who carries his Motion. — Adams confers with Franklin on a separate Confederacy of such States as are inclined to Independence. — He will try it with New England *alone*, if none of the others will join. — Advises Retaliation for British Outrages. — Advocates disarming the Tories. — Supports Washington's Plan of obtaining Enlistments for the War. — The Quaker Peace Convention. — Adams replies to their Address. — John Adams returns to Congress. — The British driven from Boston. — Vandalism of the Soldiers in Adams's Homestead. — Conduct of Hancock at Philadelphia. — He joins a Party against the Adamses and other New-Englanders. — His Anti-republican Tendencies. — His Quarrel with Adams. — Contemporary Narratives of Hancock's Course in Congress.

THE petition of this Congress to the King had, meanwhile, been presented to Lord Dartmouth in October, 1775, by Richard Penn, to whom it had been intrusted. The minister informed the bearer peremptorily that no answer would be returned. The King refused to notice it, and in his speech to Parliament declared that the Colonists were in a state of actual rebellion, with the object of independence, to defeat which the most vigorous and decisive measures were necessary ; that he had increased his forces, and secured the aid of German stipendiary troops. A portion of the Ministry and many members of Parliament now admitted that the primary views of government, as to imposing taxes upon the Colonies, had been erroneous, and that designing persons had deceived them respecting the original intentions and sentiments of the people of America. Others, while they denied the right of taxation, upon which alone the present mountain of difficulty had grown, were now in favor of sub-

jugating the Colonies to prevent their becoming independent. Burke's bill, repealing the offensive acts and granting an amnesty as to the past, was rejected by a great majority, though supported by the utmost efforts of that inspired orator and the entire strength of the opposition. The determination of Britain was irrevocably to exert her own and all the mercenary power she could hire to crush the Colonists into submission.

When the news of these debates reached Philadelphia, Mr. Adams, among a few others, was all the more convinced of the utter impossibility of ever effecting any equitable arrangement. It was evident that no anti-ministerial proposition could succeed. Lord North's "conciliatory bill," declaring war against the Colonists, seizing and confiscating their property wherever found, but making certain specious but unsatisfactory provisions concerning peace and pardon to repentant Colonies or individuals, became a law; but no approach was made towards conceding any of the just rights claimed by the Americans. Samuel Adams availed himself of these events as additional arguments in favor of "the chief wish of his heart." From among his writings this winter the following will illustrate his ideas of the approaching act of separation. It appeared on the 12th of February, as "An Earnest Appeal to the People."

"I cannot recall an idea to my mind more amazingly absurd and stupid, than the idea of Lord North's second attempt to gull the Colonies into a belief of his inclination to hold out to them terms of a safe and amicable reconciliation with Great Britain. No one is ignorant that the Americans have offered everything that can possibly be devised to bury the injurious and enslaving claim of Administration in perpetual oblivion, and leave matters on the same footing that they were before the pretence was held up. These generous proposals, however often repeated, have as often been rejected with an insolent contempt; and yet the profound politician tells his opponents, in the British House of Commons, that he is heartily inclined to a reconciliation with the Colonies, and willing

to put them in the situation they so passionately desire; that is (says he to a courtier demanding explanation), in a state of absolute dependence on the British Parliament in all cases whatsoever; for, says his Lordship, they were unquestionably thus dependent in 1763.

“Had his Lordship entirely forgot the success of his former experiments, perhaps a trial of the same wretched trick over again might have appeared less ridiculous, — I may indeed say, less insulting to the lowest understanding. I would ask the most credulous votary for making up the dispute, what possible grounds they perceive to found their expectations of a permanent reconciliation upon? Has anything lately turned up which has indicated a change of disposition in the prince or his favorites? Can a majority which has been secured from one seven years to another by pure force of corruption be depended on to remain firm to a slaughtering, plundering, and desolating Court, and share the detestation of present and future ages for mere nothing? Has the Court resolved to cast Bernard, Hutchinson, and daughter of Richardson the murderer, crazy John Malcolm, and Richardson the recent volunteer, out on the community? I tell you, nay.

“You have a fresh instance of the firmness of the Cabinet, in adding another three thousand pound pensioner to the list, in a conjuncture when all mankind will confess there is need of saving. These burdensome pensions must come from some part of the dominions. If Great Britain and Ireland have conceived such a mortal hatred to America that they can hug her most inveterate enemies in their bosom, and vote them such munificent rewards for drawing her into so destructive a civil war, we cannot be safe in the power of such enemies. If they abound in resources as largely as Mr. Wedderburn and others boast they do, let them cease complaining of their poverty, and contentedly discharge their own national debt, rather than go on augmenting it by their efforts to saddle it with an unlimited pension-list upon America.

“Does the nation bear the present unnatural quarrel with America on other terms than a firm assurance of the Court, that millions of leading men’s dependents shall be provided for in America, for whom places can by no means be found at home? Is not the very genius of the people of Great Britain and Ireland corrupted, inso-much that the views of young fellows of education, or any connec-

tion with men of note, are altogether set on public money? Can our peaceable men indulge a gleam of hope that this humor will alter, or that youths bred in idleness and dissipation will become industrious and disinterested patriots? If not, then must they be so weak as to conceit that ministers will become less fond of finger-ing the public money, and securing themselves in places of power and profit by means of it,—indeed, that they will become more honest and saving of the national money than those the Constitution has appointed as a check upon them.

“It is no wonder they tell of sending a formidable fleet and army to bring over their terms of reconciliation, when they are in no one article different from the terms they first aimed to impose. Had the Ministry, or, more properly, the obstinate author of all our troubles, had the remotest idea of favoring us with a government of laws which had any respect to the security of our lives and properties, he had long since granted with a good grace petitions made and repeated with the most dutiful and persevering affection, which asked for nothing more. *Sed aut Cæsar aut nullus*, seems the unalterable determination of the man who soothed our already elated expectations by an inaugural declaration, that he gloried in the name of Briton, then a distinctive characteristic of the patrons of universal liberty. If, therefore, the whole body of the governing and influential part of the governed in Great Britain be unalterably set upon extorting tribute from the Colonies; and the better to secure the collection of it, claims right to impose laws and executors of those laws, dependent only on themselves for appointment, continuance, and support, and all these extended at their sole pleasure, it may readily be determined in what condition the absolutely passive subjects of such an unnatural usurpation would quickly be. It is evident they have concluded on two things, viz. to make a bold push for our entire subjection, as their ends would be thereby more readily answered; but, that being found impracticable, we are to be tried with negotiation, in which all the craft, duplicity, and punic faith of Administration is to be expected. Pray God it may be wisely and firmly guarded against! The honorable and worthy John Collins, Esq., of Newport, Rhode Island, on the arrival of Lord North’s last conciliatory plan, observed, that, notwithstanding the exposure of his large estate to whatever depredations the enemy saw fit to make upon it, he was more concerned for the prob-

able success of their arts than their arms. Had the Americans in general the wisdom and firmness of that gentleman, matters would never have come to the present melancholy lengths we find them.

“However, in the great and general plan of Him who putteth down and setteth up states, there is, doubtless, an indispensable part, and, therefore, not to be complained of; but it had amazed me to contemplate the numerous instances of disappointment our enemies have met with in every plot they have laid for our destruction. How did Bernard and Hutchinson flatter themselves in the number of friends they had in the Massachusetts, and thought that a very trifling force from the other side of the water, added to their minions, dependents, and expectants, would crush a little turbulent faction who disturbed their darling measures? Certainly, men intoxicated with a love of absolute power found something in the appearance of things to tole them on to an object so grateful to their fondest wishes; otherwise they would have been contented to augment and confirm their power by such unperceived degrees, that the happy days many tell us we have enjoyed under a continually invading usurpation would not yet have been so sensibly interrupted. No less has the so-often extolled Governor Tryon been disappointed in his benevolent intentions respecting New York. His band on Long Island, and on the east side of Hudson’s River, with Sir John Johnson among his vassals, and the Indians, gave him great hopes of having matters in a fine train, before the invincible Armada arrived in the spring; instead of which, it is probable the active General Lee will so fortify that place, that all the force they can spend against it will be insufficient to reduce it. Dunmore, with all his wanton ravage, has done little more than exasperate the Virginians, and convince that brave Colony that they can be formidable to savages on the east as well as on the west side of their dominion. Carleton’s Canadians make no such figure in the harangue of the pensioner as they did last year, and, in case foreigners are to be procured to be poured in upon us, the greatest opposers of our total separation from Britain acknowledge they would then no longer defer a declaration of independency, and application to other powers for their protection. To this the whole scene appears rapidly advancing, in my view, as hastily as Infinite Wisdom thinks proper to conduct it; and if this be His most gracious design, He will work and none shall hinder.

“SINCERUS.”

The responsibility of the American Revolution rested upon George the Third rather than upon his advisers. He outstripped all his ministers in the relentless policy of subjugation, and was himself the originator of most of the measures against the Colonies. Mr. Adams considered him the "obdurate author of all their troubles." When the King's speech reached America, Adams was not surprised at its character, for he had opposed sending any petition from this Congress, and all his conduct showed how little he anticipated any other result. He had years before expressed himself, that no *one man or set of men* should exercise unrestrained dictation over the liberties of millions. As the early teacher and "Father of Democracy," as he was termed in the last century, he looked with the eye of an enthusiast to the time when the great future of a pure democracy should dawn upon the Western continent. "The tyrant!" said he, as he read the vindictive and inexorable ultimatum of royalty, "his speech breathes the most malevolent spirit, and determines my opinion of its author as a man of a wicked heart. I have heard that he is his own minister; why, then, should we cast the odium of distressing mankind upon his minions? Guilt must lie at his door: divine vengeance will fall on his head"; and, says Bancroft, "with the aid of Wythe of Virginia, the patriot set vigorously to work to bring on a confederation and independence."¹

His chief antagonist at this time was Wilson of Pennsylvania, who strongly opposed the, to him, alarming growth of independence. This member moved the appointment of a committee to explain to their constituents and to the world the principles and grounds of their opposition, and their present intentions respecting independence." Against the formidable force which was soon arrayed in support of this policy Samuel Adams, who saw the danger, took the lead, and rallied the bolder members to defeat the proposal. A circumstantial narration of this preliminary contest for

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 242.

independence, could the events have been recorded and preserved, would throw a flood of light upon the character of the principal actors in this Congress. The doubts, fears, and hesitancy of some, and the boldness and resolution of others, would be apparent, where now we survey their gradual advance as a whole, without being able to examine the conflicting passions of individual parts. Samuel Adams seldom spoke long upon any subject. What he said was always to the point. His style, grave and impressive, was so associated with his venerable appearance and personal dignity of manner, that he was always heard with attention and respect. Though he was not a declaimer, his councils were ever ready on momentous occasions. But in this instance he must have borne the brunt of debate, as far as his own delegation was concerned, — John Adams being still absent, and Cushing and Paine siding with Wilson.¹ Despite his utmost exertions, the motion prevailed. Alluding to other debates through the fall, winter, and spring, John Adams, in his Autobiography, recollects that in his own efforts he received but little assistance from his colleagues. "Three of them," he says, "were either inclined to lean to Mr. Dickinson's system, or at least chose to be silent, and the fourth spoke but rarely in Congress, and never entered into any extensive arguments, though, when he did speak, his sentiments were clear and pertinent, and neatly expressed."² But though Samuel Adams was not a fluent elocutionist, he could rise into earnest and forcible speaking when the occasion required, as numerous contemporary witnesses testify; and the present was a crisis which must have called into requisition all his powers. He seems to have deeply felt the vexatious obstacles constantly placed by timidity in the path towards independence. About this time he wrote to James Warren, then Speaker of the Massachusetts House: —

"You ask me when you are to hear of our confederation. I an-

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 242.

² John Adams, Works, II. 506.

swer, when some gentlemen, — to use the expression of a Tory, — ‘shall feel more bold.’ You know it was formerly a complaint in our Colony, that there was a timid kind of men, who perpetually hindered the progress of those who would fain run in the path of virtue and glory. I feel, wherever I am, that mankind are alike variously classed. I can discover the magnanimity of the lion, the generosity of the horse, the fearfulness of the deer, and the cunning of the fox, — I had almost overlooked the fidelity of the dog. But I forbear to indulge my rambling pen in this way, lest I should be thought chargeable with a design to degrade the dignity of our nature by comparing men with beasts. Let me just observe that I have mentioned only the more excellent qualities that are to be found among quadrupeds. Had I suggested an idea of the vanity of the ape, the tameness of the ox, or the stupid servility of the ass, I might have been liable to censure.

“Are you solicitous to hear of our confederation? I will tell you. ‘It is not dead, but sleepeth.’ A gentleman of this city told me the other day that he could not believe the people without doors would follow the Congress *passibus æquis*, if such measures as some called spirited were pursued. It put me in mind of a fable of the high-mettled horse and the dull horse, — my excellent colleague, Mr. J. A., can repeat the fable to you; and if the improvement had been made in it which our very valuable Colonel M. proposed, you would have seen that confederation completed long before this time. I do not despair of it, since our enemies themselves are hastening it.”¹

Warren and John Adams, who were both at Watertown when this letter arrived from Philadelphia, doubtless knew to whom their friend alluded. To them he needed to make no explanation; and information of a similar nature had before this produced its effects with the members of the Massachusetts Assembly. The election of delegates to the Continental Congress had already taken place, when Hancock, the two Adamses, and Paine were re-elected; but out of one hundred and twenty-nine votes, Paine had but sixty-five, while Cushing received none. When the Assembly heard of his “pusillanimous wavering,”² they chose El-

¹ Samuel Adams to James Warren, Jan. 7, 1776.

² Bancroft, VIII. 243.

bridge Gerry in his place, and empowered the delegation, "any one or more of them, with those from other American Colonies, to concert, direct, and order such further measures as should to them appear best calculated for the establishment of right and liberty to the American Colonies, upon a basis permanent and secure against the power and arts of the British Administration, and guarded against any future encroachments of their enemies, with power to adjourn to such times and places as should appear most conducive to the public safety and advantage." The Assembly authorized the payment of one hundred and thirty pounds to each of the delegates, "to enable them to defray their expenses and support the dignity of their office." Adams, like the others, received the notification of his election as follows: —

SIR, —

COUNCIL CHAMBER, January 19, 1776.

Agreeable to the directions of the enclosed resolution, I am to acquaint you that, by a joint ballot of both Houses of Assembly for the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, you are elected one of the delegates to represent that Colony in the American Congress, until the 1st day of January, 1777; and the enclosed resolution you are to make the general rule of your conduct.

By order of the General Court,

PEREZ MORTON, *Deputy Secretary*.

To SAMUEL ADAMS, Esq.

The temporary success of Wilson, in defeating the plan of a confederation, was aided by the course of New Hampshire, where, in Portsmouth, the intention of separating from the parent country was disavowed, and the continuance of the new Constitution was only authorized "during the unnatural contest with Great Britain." They protested they had never sought to throw off their dependence, and desired to join in such a conciliation as the Continental Congress should approve. Instructions were sent to the New Hampshire delegates in Congress to that effect. There was a strong loyal sentiment among the influential Tory circles in New Hampshire until 1776. One of the three loyal mil-

itary corps organized in New England, was the "Wentworth Volunteers," named after Governor Wentworth. Shortly after the contest in which Samuel Adams had battled Wilson and his party, he wrote to John Adams, giving an inkling of his important conference with Franklin, in which, alarmed at the progress of the opposition, he had proposed a confederation of the New England Colonies, in case the others continued to decline the proposition.

"I have seen certain instructions which were given by the capital of the Colony of New Hampshire to its delegates in their Provincial congregation, the spirit of which I am not altogether pleased with. There is one part of them, at least, which I think discovers a timidity which is unbecoming a people oppressed and insulted as they are, and who, at their own request, have been advised and authorized by Congress to set up and exercise government in such form as they should judge most conducive to their own happiness. It is easy to understand what they mean when they speak of 'perfecting a form of government *stable and permanent*.' They indeed explain themselves by saying 'that *they should prefer the government of Congress* (their Provincial Convention) till quieter times.' The reason they assign for it, I fear, will be considered as showing a readiness to condescend to the humors of their enemies, and their publicly, expressly, and totally disavowing independence either on the nation or the *man* who insolently and perseveringly demands the surrender of their liberties with the bayonet pointed at their breasts, may be considered to argue a servility and baseness of soul for which language doth not afford an epithet. It is by indiscreet resolutions and publications that the friends of America have too often given occasion to their enemies to injure her cause. I hope, however, that the town of Portsmouth doth not in this instance speak the sense of that Colony. I wish, if it be not too late, that you would write your sentiments of the subject to our worthy friend, Mr. L——, who, I suppose, is now in Portsmouth. If that Colony should take a wrong step, I fear it would wholly defeat a design which, I confess, I have much at heart.

"A motion was made in Congress the other day to the following purpose: 'That whereas we have been charged with aiming at independency, a committee should be appointed to explain to the peo-

ple at large the principles and grounds of our opposition,' &c., &c. The motion alarmed me. I thought Congress had already been explicit enough, and was apprehensive that we might get ourselves upon dangerous ground. Some of us prevailed so far as to have the matter postponed, but could not prevent the assigning a day to consider it. I may, perhaps, have been wrong in opposing this motion; and I ought the rather to suspect it, because the majority of your Colony, as well as of the Congress, were of a different opinion.

"I had lately some free conversation with an eminent gentleman whom you well know, and whom your 'Portia,' in one of her letters, admired for his *expressive silence* about a confederation;¹ a matter which our much valued friend, Colonel W——, is very solicitous to have completed. We agreed that it must soon be brought on, and that if all the Colonies could not come into it, it had better be done by those of them that inclined to it. I told him that I would endeavor to unite the New England Colonies in confederating, if none of the rest would join it. He approved of it, and said if I succeeded, he would cast his lot among us.²

"As this express did not set off yesterday according to my expectation, I have the opportunity of acquainting you that Congress has just received a letter from General Washington, enclosing the copy of an application of our General Assembly to him to order payment to four companies stationed at Braintree, Weymouth, and Hingham. The General says they were never regimented, and he cannot comply with the request of the Assembly without the direction of Congress. A committee is appointed to consider the letter, of which I am one. I fear there will be a difficulty, and therefore I shall en-

¹ Dr. Franklin is here referred to. John Adams evidently showed this letter to Dr. Gordon, who was then engaged in collecting materials for his History.

² This was no new idea with Samuel Adams. See Chap. XIX., where, in the letter of instructions from the House to Franklin, then agent in London, he says, after alluding to the efforts to detach the sister Colonies from Massachusetts: "But should all the other Colonies become weary of their liberties, after the example of the Hebrews, this Province will never submit to the authority of an absolute government." That the project now suggested to Dr. Franklin could have been consummated may be inferred from the success of the New England League, proposed by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, while Samuel Adams was a member, shortly before the battle of Lexington. See Chap. XXXV.

deavor to prevent a report on this part of the letter, unless I see a prospect of justice being done to the Colony, till I can receive from you authentic evidence of those companies having been actually employed by the Continental officers, as I conceive they have been in the service of the continent. I wish you would inform me whether the two companies stationed at Chelsea and Malden were paid out of the continent's chest. I suppose they were; and if so, I cannot see reason for any hesitation about the payment of these. I wish also to know how many men our Colony is at the expense of maintaining for the defence of its sea-coasts. Pray let us have some intelligence from you of the Colony which we represent. You are sensible of the danger it has frequently been in, of suffering greatly for want of regular information."¹

His "much valued friend, Colonel W——," mentioned in this letter, undoubtedly is Colonel Seth Warner, — a brave soldier and patriot. A part of the silent, but wide-reaching policy of Samuel Adams, is indicated in the following extract of a letter written in the fall of this year: —

"Tis reported Colonel Warner has said he was advised to petition Congress to have the Hampshire grants set off in a new State by Mr. Adams, one of the delegates. The people are much divided, — some for a new State, some for joining Hampshire, others Massachusetts, many for remaining under New York. I endeavored to dissuade them from persisting in such idle and delusive schemes."²

Towards the close of the war this became an important subject; New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts each putting forward claims to the Vermont Territory, then known as the Hampshire grants. Massachusetts pressed its claims only in opposition to those of the others, who, she feared, would absorb these lands, and defeat the project of an additional State. In 1780, the question was settled, though not until the most alarming complications had arisen, at one time threatening civil war.

¹ Samuel to John Adams, Philadelphia, Jan. 15 and 16, 1776.

² John Taylor to Pierre Van Courtlandt, Albany, Nov. 3, 1776 (*Force's American Archives*, Fifth Series, III. 503, 504).

Among the most potent elements of the opposition to independence, and in favor of all measures tending towards submission, were the Quakers, — a sect which, with due respect for their religious principles, Mr. Adams regarded as particularly detrimental to the liberties of America. Their advice was steadily for conciliation, — a doctrine in keeping with their peaceful character. On the 20th of January, a convention of Quakers, representing New Jersey and Pennsylvania, assembled at Philadelphia, and issued an address, "To the People in General," in which they quoted the ancient testimony and principles of their society, with respect to kings and governments.

"The benefits, advantages, and favors," says this address, "we have experienced by our dependence on, and connection with, the kings and government under which we have enjoyed this happy state, appear to demand from us the greatest circumspection, care, and constant endeavors to guard against every attempt to alter or subvert that dependence and connection."

The paper then proceeds at some length to argue against interfering with established rulers, and enjoins "a continuance of mutual peaceable endeavors for effecting a reconciliation with England." To counteract the effect of these sickly counsels, Samuel Adams, on the 3d of February, published an address to "The People of Pennsylvania," taking the "Testimony of the Quakers" for his text, and showing the absurdity of a further dependence upon Great Britain in a moral as well as political point of view.

"When the little pamphlet, entitled 'Common Sense,' first made its appearance in favor of that so often abjured idea of independence upon Great Britain, I was informed that no less than three gentlemen of respectable abilities were engaged to answer it. As yet, I have seen nothing which directly pretends to dispute a single position of the author. The oblique essay in Humphrey's paper, and solemn 'Testimony of the Quakers,' however intended, having offered nothing to the purpose, I shall take leave to exam-

ine this important question with all candor and attention, and submit the result to my much interested country.

“Dependence of one man or state upon another is either absolute or limited by some certain terms of agreement. The dependence of these Colonies, which Great Britain calls constitutional, as declared by acts of Parliament, is absolute. If the contrary of this be the bugbear so many have been disclaiming against, I could wish my countrymen would consider the consequence of so stupid a profession. If a limited dependence is intended, I would be much obliged to any one who will show me the *Britannico-American Magna Charta*, wherein the terms of our limited dependence are precisely stated. If no such thing can be found, and absolute dependence be accounted inadmissible, the sound we are squabbling about has certainly no determinate meaning. If we say we mean that kind of dependence we acknowledged at and before the year 1763, I answer, vague and uncertain laws, and more especially constitutions, are the very instruments of slavery. The *Magna Charta* of England was very explicit, considering the time it was formed, and yet much blood was spilled in disputes concerning its meaning.

“Besides the danger of an indefinite dependence upon an undetermined power, it might be worth while to consider what the characters are on whom we are so ready to acknowledge ourselves dependent. The votaries for this idol tell us, upon the good people of our mother country, whom they represent as the most just, humane, and affectionate friends we can have in the world. Were this true, it were some encouragement; but who can pretend ignorance, that these just and humane friends are as much under the tyranny of men of a reverse character as we should be, could these miscreants gain their ends? I disclaim any more than a mutual dependence on any man or number of men on earth; but an indefinite dependence upon a combination of men who have, in the face of the sun, broken through the most solemn covenants, debauched the hereditary, and corrupted the elective guardians of the people's rights; who have, in fact, established an absolute tyranny in Great Britain and Ireland, and openly declared themselves competent to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever, — I say, indefinite dependence on such a combination of usurping innovators is evidently as dangerous to liberty, as fatal to civil and social happiness, as any one step that could be proposed even by the destroyer of men.

The utmost that the honest party in Great Britain can do is to warn us to avoid this dependence at all hazards. Does not even a Duke of Grafton declare the ministerial measures illegal and dangerous? And shall America, no way connected with this Administration, press our submission to such measures and reconciliation to the authors of them? Would not such pigeon-hearted wretches equally forward the recall of the Stuart family and establishment of Popery throughout Christendom, did they consider the party in favor of those loyal measures the strongest? Shame on the men who can court exemption from present trouble and expense at the price of their own posterity's liberty! The honest party in England cannot wish for the reconciliation proposed. It is as unsafe to them as to us, and they thoroughly apprehend it. What check have they now upon the Crown, and what shadow of control can they pretend, when the Crown can command fifteen or twenty millions a year which they have nothing to say to? A proper proportion of our commerce is all that can benefit any good man in Britain or Ireland; and God forbid we should be so cruel as to furnish bad men with the power to enslave both Britain and America. Administration has now fairly dis severed the dangerous tie. Execrated will he be by the latest posterity who again joins the fatal cord!

“‘But,’ say the puling, pusillanimous cowards, ‘we shall be subject to a long and bloody war, if we declare independence.’ On the contrary, I affirm it the only step that can bring the contest to a speedy and happy issue. By declaring independence we put ourselves on a footing for an equal negotiation. Now we are called a pack of villanous rebels, who, like the St. Vincent’s Indians, can expect nothing more than a pardon for our lives, and the sovereign favor respecting freedom, and property to be at the King’s will. Grant, Almighty God, that I may be numbered with the dead before that sable day dawns on North America.

“All Europe knows the illegal and inhuman treatment we have received from Britons. All Europe wishes the haughty Empress of the Main reduced to a more humble deportment. After herself has thrust her Colonies from her, the maritime powers cannot be such idiots as to suffer her to reduce them to a more absolute obedience of her dictates than they were heretofore obliged to yield. Does not the most superficial politician know, that while we profess

ourselves the subjects of Great Britain, and yet hold arms against her, they have a right to treat us as rebels, and that, according to the laws of nature and nations, no other state has a right to interfere in the dispute? But, on the other hand, on our declaration of independence, the maritime states, at least, will find it their interest (which always secures the question of inclination) to protect a people who can be so advantageous to them. So that those shortsighted politicians, who conclude that this step will involve us in slaughter and devastation, may plainly perceive that no measure in our power will so naturally and effectually work our deliverance. The motion of a finger of the Grand Monarch would produce as gentle a temper in the omnipotent British minister as appeared in the Manilla ransom and Falkland Island affairs. From without, certainly, we have everything to hope, nothing to fear. From within, some tell us that the Presbyterians, if freed from the restraining power of Great Britain, would overrun the peaceable Quakers in this government. For my own part, I despise and detest the bickerings of sectaries, and am apprehensive of no trouble from that quarter, especially while no peculiar honors or emoluments are annexed to either. I heartily wish too many of the Quakers did not give cause of complaint, by endeavoring to counteract the measures of their fellow-citizens for the common safety. If they profess themselves only pilgrims here, let them walk through the men of this world without interfering with their actions on either side. If they would not pull down kings, let them not support tyrants; for, whether they understand it or not, there is, and ever has been, an essential difference in the characters.

“Finally, with *M. de Vattel*, I account a state a moral person, having an interest and will of its own; and I think that state a monster whose prime mover has an interest and will in direct opposition to its prosperity and security. This position has been so clearly demonstrated in the pamphlet first mentioned in this essay, that I shall only add, if there are any arguments in favor of returning to a state of dependence on Great Britain, that is, on the present Administration of Great Britain, I could wish they were timely offered, that they may be soberly considered before the cunning proposals of the Cabinet set all the timid, lazy, and irresolute members of the community into a clamor for peace at any rate.

“*CANDIDUS.*”

One of the results of the resolutions reported in October by Deane, Samuel Adams, and Duane, recommending the immediate raising of troops in New York for the defence of the Hudson, was a reply from the Provincial Convention of that Colony, advising Congress to delay an appeal to arms in New York, until better preparations could be made, and recommending that the disaffected on Long Island should be disarmed. This subject, together with sundry letters from Lord Stirling, on a variety of pressing military matters in New Jersey, was referred to Samuel Adams, William Livingston, and John Jay, who soon recommended the bold and sweeping measure of disarming the Tories in every Colony, and authorizing the several Assemblies and Conventions to call to their aid the Continental troops, whenever required for that purpose.¹ Adams, as chairman, undoubtedly prepared the report, which has the style of neither Livingston nor Jay. After making ample provisions for the equipment of the New Jersey battalions, which might be wanted for the defence of New York, it proceeds:—

“Whereas it has been represented to this Congress, that divers honest and well-meaning but uninformed people in these Colonies have, by the art and address of ministerial agents, been deceived, and drawn into erroneous opinions respecting the American cause, and the probable issue of the present contest :

“*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the various Committees, and other friends to American liberty in the said Colonies, to treat all such persons with kindness and attention ; to consider them as the inhabitants of a country determined to be free, and to view their errors as proceeding rather from want of information than want of virtue or public spirit ; to explain to them the origin, nature, and extent of the present controversy ; to acquaint them with the fate of the numerous petitions presented to his Majesty, as well by Assemblies as Congresses, for reconciliation and redress of grievances ; and that the last from this Congress, humbly requesting the single favor of being heard, like all the others, has proved unsuccessful ; to unfold to them the various arts of Administration

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 276. Journals of Congress, Dec. 26, 1775.

to ensnare and enslave us, and the manner in which we have been cruelly driven to defend by arms those very rights, liberties, and estates which we and our forefathers had so long enjoyed unmolested, in the reigns of his present Majesty's predecessors. And it is hereby recommended to all Conventions and Assemblies in these Colonies liberally to distribute among the people the proceedings of this and the former Congress, the late speeches of the great patriots in both Houses of Parliament relative to American grievances, and such other pamphlets and papers as tend to elucidate the merits of the American cause; the Congress being fully persuaded that the more our right to the enjoyment of our ancient liberties and privileges is examined, the more just and necessary our present opposition to ministerial tyranny will appear.

"And, with respect to all such unworthy Americans as, regardless of their duty to their Creator, their country, and their posterity, have taken part with our oppressors, and, influenced by the hope or possession of ignominious rewards, strive to recommend themselves to the bounty of Administration by misrepresenting and traducing the conduct and principles of the friends of American liberty, and opposing every measure formed for its preservation and security :

"*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the different Assemblies, Conventions, and Committees, or Councils of Safety in the United Colonies, by the most speedy and effectual measures to frustrate the mischievous machinations, and restrain the wicked practices of these men; and it is the opinion of this Congress that they ought to be disarmed, and the more dangerous among them either kept in safe custody or bound with sufficient securities to their good behavior.

"And, in order that the said Assemblies, Conventions, Committees, or Councils of Safety may be enabled with greater ease and facility to carry this resolution into execution :

"*Resolved*, That they be authorized to call to their aid whatever Continental troops, stationed in or near their respective Colonies, may be conveniently spared from their more immediate duty; and the commanding officers of such troops are hereby directed to afford the said Assemblies, Conventions, Committees, or Councils of Safety all such assistance in executing this resolution as they may require, and which, consistent with the good of the service, may be supplied.

"*Resolved*, That all detachments of Continental troops, which may

be ordered on the business in the foregoing resolution mentioned, be, while so employed, under the direction and control of the Assemblies, Conventions, Committees, or Councils of Safety aforesaid.

“Resolved, That it be recommended to all the United Colonies to aid each other (on request from their respective Assemblies, Conventions, Committees, or Councils of Safety, and County Committees) on every emergency, and to cultivate, cherish, and increase the present happy and necessary union by a continual interchange of mutual good offices.

“And whereas the execrable barbarity with which this unhappy war has been conducted on the part of our enemies, such as burning our defenceless towns and villages, exposing their inhabitants, without regard to sex or age, to all the miseries which loss of property, the rigor of the season, and inhuman devastation can inflict, exciting domestic insurrections and murders, bribing savages to desolate our frontiers, and casting such of us as the fortune of war has put in their power into gaols, there to languish in irons and in want,¹ compelling the inhabitants of Boston, in violation of the treaty, to remain confined within the town, exposed to the insolence of the soldiery, and other enormities at the mention of which decency and humanity will ever blush, may justly provoke the inhabitants of these Colonies to retaliate :

“Resolved, That it be recommended to them to continue mindful that humanity ought to distinguish the brave, that cruelty should find no admission among a free people, and to take care that no page in the annals of America be stained by a recital of any action which justice or Christianity may condemn, and to rest assured that whatever retaliation may be necessary, or tend to their security, this Congress will undertake the disagreeable task.”²

Having taken so large a part in the composition of the state papers of the Massachusetts Assembly in its contests with the royal governors for nine years, Samuel Adams naturally considered them as exceedingly important agents in

¹ Referring doubtless to the cruel imprisonment at Boston of his friend James Lovell, in whose behalf Mr. Adams had already prepared resolutions which he introduced in Congress a day or two later. See Journals of Congress, Jan. 5, 1776.

² Journals of Congress, Jan. 2, 1776.

explaining to the public the basis of the war and the justice of the American cause. Most of the subsequent papers of the Congresses, with their great principles of liberty, were actually founded upon the arguments elaborated in these preliminary writings,—arguments which, in after generations, seem to have quite disappeared before the more conspicuous documents of the Continental Congresses, but nevertheless helped to form the corner-stone of American freedom. One of the resolutions submitted by the present committee provided that copies of these petitions, memorials, and remonstrances from all the Colonies be sent to Congress, with information as to what answers had been returned by the throne or either House of Parliament. The events of the war rendered a compliance with this part of the resolutions impracticable. The idea of retaliation, however, which is embodied in these resolves, Mr. Adams steadily adhered to; and when, in the following winter, it was rumored that General Lee, who had been captured by the British, was to be shot, Adams advocated a similar award to be meted out to six of the Hessian officers then captives in the hands of the Americans; and in October, 1778, he moved in Congress the most severe retaliation for the threatened barbarities of the enemy. There was nothing cruel in his nature; but when war was to be conducted upon the basis of wanton barbarity, he was for dealing in kind with antagonists who turned even the common miseries of war into a riot of demons and savages. The next day after the adoption of the present resolves, the Committee on the State of New York followed the example by reporting in favor of disarming every man in Queen's County who had voted against sending deputies to the New York Congress; and the efficacy and necessity of this bold policy becoming more extensively recognized, in a few weeks it was generally adopted throughout the Colonies.

Congress during the month of February was engaged in a multiplicity of business. Much must be left to inference

as regards the particular part taken by the subject of these memoirs. The general tone of the proceedings indicates the same hampered struggle of a small number of resolute members towards independence, through a series of initiatory measures, Samuel and John Adams, Gerry, Wythe, Ward, Chase, Wolcott, Sherman, Richard Henry Lee, and a few others forming a group of the chief actors against the great mass of opponents from the Middle and Southern Colonies, many of whom continued to entertain a jealous fear of the alleged sinister designs of the New England delegates. The most useful debaters were apparently John Adams, Richard Henry Lee, and Wythe; those whose personal influence among the members was exerted most effectively were Samuel Adams, Sherman, and Chase; though each of these, far from being silent in debate, occasionally spoke, but much less frequently than some who, like those already mentioned, were considered the mouthpieces of Congress. Where the journals give little more than the names and objects of the committees appointed, we can only occasionally distinguish Samuel Adams; but, in these instances, he always appears associated with the most important proceedings. He assumed the place of Cushing on the Committee of Claims, when that member and Langdon, the chairman, left Congress for home.¹ The duties of this committee continued many months, and appear to have been constant and wide reaching. He also took the place of Cushing as a member of the Committee on the State of the Treasury.² Any connection with the reduction of the distracted financial affairs of the continent to a system of order must have been attended with no little difficulty. Of the labors of this committee, however, no record exists, save that, about the middle of the month, they reported a plan providing for a standing committee of five, for superintending the treasury, whose duties were specified. With that report, they also recommended the emission of four millions of dollars on the

¹ Journals of Congress, January 2, 1776.

² *Ibid.*, February 1, 1776.

same security as the sums already raised. Adams also appears on committees for the consideration of pressing military letters relating to the conduct of the war.

The convention of Quakers already alluded to had been called more especially in view of the extraordinary effect of Paine's "Common Sense," which was now in everybody's hands, and was praised or attacked throughout America. That the Quakers "abhorred" such writing was one of the best proofs of its effectiveness. That body, in counselling submission and continued dependence upon Great Britain, had in their address spoken of changes in government "as affecting every mind with the most awful considerations of the dispensations of Divine Providence to mankind in general in former ages, and that as the sins and iniquities of the people had in ancient times subjected them to grievous sufferings, the same causes might still produce the like effects." They then quote certain ancient testimony to prove that

"The setting up and putting down kings and governments is God's peculiar prerogative for causes best known to himself, and that it is not our business to have any hand or contrivance therein; nor to be busybodies above our station, much less to plot and contrive the ruin or overturn of any of them, but to pray for the King and safety of our nation and good of all men; that we may live a peaceable and quiet life in all goodness and honesty, under the government which God is pleased to set over us.

"May we, therefore, firmly unite in the abhorrence of all such writings and measures as evidence a desire and design to break off the happy connection we have hitherto enjoyed with the kingdom of Great Britain, and our just and necessary subordination to the King and those who are lawfully placed in authority under him."

Mr. Adams accepted this religious, providential view of the question, and replied soon after, showing by historical examples, that as the rise and fall of empires and rulers was within the special prerogative of God, the present revolution was none the less the result of omnipotent design, and that

in God's providence, the time for the establishment of an independent commonwealth in the West had arrived. Men were but the instruments in his hands for such purposes. Divine will had evidently selected the present moment for the separation of America from Great Britain. This essay, like the Quakers' address, was directed to the "People in General."

"When the Prophet Samuel was sent to Bethlehem to anoint a King out of the house of Jesse, and had the eldest son of his family brought before him, his lofty stature and goodly appearance made the Prophet cry out, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.' But he received this gentle reproof from his divine conductor: 'Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'

"Were man to set about the destruction or dissolution of a great empire, he would begin by making choice of one of the mightiest powers upon earth to effect it. Then vast warlike preparations would succeed; nor would he enter upon the grand design until his armies were so numerous, and his instruments of war so terrible and destructive, that they might well be styled the Invincibles. All would now begin to move, and the whole world tremble at his approach; but a few months would convince him that without God he could do nothing. On the other hand, He who sets up and pulls down, confines or extends empires at his pleasure, generally, if not always, carries on his great work with instruments apparently unfit for the great purpose, but which in his hands are always effectual. By this means, the part he takes appears visible, and the glory of success is given to whom it is due.

"It always gives me sensible delight when I see public calamities affect mankind with a sense of religion and earnest desire of reformation; and I most heartily concur in sentiment with the representatives of a certain people, 'that our minds ought to be affected with the most awful considerations of the dispensations of Divine Providence to mankind in general, in former ages,' that we know how to conduct ourselves in like circumstances, and avoid as much as possible the appearance of resisting the Divine Will, as publicly

declared in his providential proceedings, lest we should be found to fight against God.

“The Assyrian, one of the first and greatest empires recorded in antiquity, rose to such an height as nearly to command the then inhabited world; the consequence was, that her rulers became corrupted and arbitrary, and, forgetting the Divine designs in appointing them, they forsook the paths of justice and equity, and looked upon their people as made for their pleasure. This brought down the Divine vengeance upon her, which was executed by the Medes and Persians, two nations at that time of small consideration. On the ruins of the Assyrian arose the Persian Empire, which grew to equal, if not superior height and iniquity. It, too, was destroyed by the Macedonians, a people of no political signification a few years before they were called by Divine Providence to effect this great work. The next great empire we read of was the Roman, which, having arrived at the height of luxury and pride and arbitrariness, fell by the hands of savages who to this day have scarcely any historical existence. The Turks and the Saracens, of all the people at that day the least in the opinions of mankind, divided the Eastern and Western Empire between them. Thus most if not all of the great empires in the world have successively been overthrown by nations which, in their time, were of no political consequence. And there are few, if any, examples of one great empire being overthrown by another. The contest between Rome and Carthage was that of two great cities aiming at universal dominion, neither having at that time arisen into empire. Thus deals the Divine Providence, always taking steps which appear strange and wonderful, that the whole may bear the evident marks of his hands.

“To apply this to our present circumstances and receive instructions thereby, let us take a view of the present state of Great Britain and the conduct of Divine Providence towards this country, and it will enable us to discover the designs of Providence, and what measures we ought to pursue, that we might effectually co-operate with the Divine intentions.

“It must be allowed by every one who has the least knowledge of the English nation, that there is no degree of vice, folly, or corruption now wanting to fill up any measure of iniquity necessary for the downfall of a state. From the King on the throne to the

meanest freeman in the nation, all is corrupt. The Crown, far from regarding its duty in the political world, only uses the public money to bribe the public officer. The legislator grants the money of the people with a degree of cheerfulness proportioned to the prospect he has of handling it through fingers of corruption. The freeman sells the importance he possesses in the state for the good of himself and his neighbors for a bellyful of porter, and gives his vote to the man who, by the largess he offers, shows he is the most unfit person in the nation to be possessed of the trust. Thus men guilty of the worst of vices possess the places of power and trust, which ought to be filled by none but those of the greatest integrity and virtue. And the consequence is, that the nation is ruled with a rod of iron, and there is no part of the empire free from oppression. Her princes are corrupt, her nobles degenerate, and the representatives of the people are bought and sold. The government moves on the springs of iniquity, and the measure of their conduct is directed by their power of execution, and not by justice or equity; so that it is perhaps impossible in all history to produce a more complete state of corruption in government. *Omnia sunt venalia Romæ*, is nothing to this, for bribery is descended to the lowest dregs of the nation, and nothing is free from the touch of its pollution. The omnipotence of the Almighty is arrogated by men who rule with the tyranny of the Devil. This is Great Britain's true but melancholy condition. The eye of partial affection may cast a veil over it; but ingenuity and candor will acknowledge the facts. Tell me, then, ye devotees of religion, the intentions of God to a nation like this, and point out the advantages of being reconciled to such a government.

"Suffice this for the present on the part of the state of Great Britain. Now let us return to the conduct of Providence towards these Colonies.

"Shortly before the present contest began, the Divine counsel and wisdom permitted Great Britain and France to carry on a long and bloody war in this country, whereby the whole was reduced under the power of Great Britain, many of us were trained to arms, and all familiarized to a war at our doors, and taught to view without dread or dismay the banners of hostility waving in the air.

"Through the course of this war we gave such incontestible proofs of our loyalty and affection as drew from Great Britain the

most unequivocal acknowledgments of the same, and having performed more than could be reasonably expected of us, she returned large sums which she then thought we had expended beyond our just proportion. In this situation of affairs, we had reason to expect that we should meet with nothing but the warmest return of gratitude for our services. But they who wasted that time and treasure in folly and dissipation which ought to have been expended in acts of gratitude and praise for the unmerited favors of Heaven in the success of the war, would scarcely remember what they owed to their fellow-subjects. Accordingly our limbs were scarcely rested from the toils we endured in her service, until we were called upon to exert ourselves against her oppressions. And for more than twelve years we have labored by prayers, entreaties, non-importations, and every other peaceable mode of opposition, to prevent her enslaving us ; but all to no purpose. Our petitions from Assemblies and Congresses, from towns and Provinces, and from separate and united bodies of men, were all of no avail. The King despised and rejected them. The Parliament treated them with contempt, and the people, disregarding the justice of them, moved not in our behalf. Thus, after affectionately assisting Great Britain through a very bloody, dangerous, and expensive war, and after a twelve years' unsuccessful endeavor to remain reconciled to her on principles of right, equity, liberty, and consanguinity, we are at last reduced to the necessity of becoming independent, and entering into a war with her to preserve our privileges.

“The American quit-rents can do little as yet, but in a few years they alone would provide the King with a fund sufficient to raise and support an army necessary to enslave us, let us then be united to Britain on what principles we please. We are at present such a numerous, sober, hardy, and industrious people as in all ages have been the ablest to contend, and most successful in opposing tyranny and oppression. How long we may remain so is only known to the Deity. All parties, even the Ministry itself, agree that we must one day become independent ; and to become independent without a struggle for it is absurd to imagine. We have now gone through the first year of the war which may forever put a period to the contention. When we seriously consider the foregoing chain of events and our present happy union, it is impossible to imagine a conjunction more favorable to the independence of this country.

Less than Divine wisdom could scarcely have fixed on a fitter occasion ; and I may defy any person to point out one link of the foregoing chain which can well be wanted at the time an independency is to take place. Any one who considers these things attentively, and recollects how many opportunities she has had of setting everything right at no greater expense than hearkening to our prayers and repealing a few obnoxious acts, must believe that the designs of Providence in this affair are not trivial. God, it is generally acknowledged, sends no extraordinary messenger on an ordinary errand. We may, therefore, safely believe that all this is not for the breaking up of a junto or gratifying the ambition of a prince. No, brethren, it cannot be so. You will say it is a judgment of God upon us for our sins. Be it so. It is, like all his other judgments, sent upon a people which has not yet been incorrigible. It is a judgment in mercy, which will leave us infinitely better than it found us, if we remain not invincibly attached to a people with whom we receive little besides the contagion of vice and folly, not to say slavery and oppression.

“The peace, happiness, and prosperity we once enjoyed in connection with her is as small a proof of any obligation we are under to seek a reconciliation, as an old friendship and correspondence would be that we ought to seek a cell in Bedlam with an ancient acquaintance. Her own madness and folly have driven us from her, and God has mercifully secured our retreat. It would be rendering ourselves unworthy of his future protection to throw ourselves back upon her. She is not now what she was in those happy days of former connection, nor can we remain the happy people we then were, if we seek a reconciliation. Circumstances are materially altered.

“It need not be asked, Are we able to support the measures which will secure independency? The answer is plain and easy. Though all the world may think we are not, yet God, it appears, thinks otherwise. I say God thinks otherwise, because every part of his providential proceedings justifies the thought. We may then know what part we ought to take. God does the work, but not without instruments, and they who are employed are denominated his servants ; no king nor kingdom was ever destroyed by a miracle which effectually excluded the agency of second causes. Even Herod himself was devoured by vermin. We may affect humility

in refusing to be made the instruments of Divine vengeance, but the good servant will execute the will of his master. Samuel will slay Agag ; Moses, Aaron, and Hur will pray in the mountain, and Joshua will defeat the Canaanites.

“ A RELIGIOUS POLITICIAN.”

Through the whole of this month a deeply interesting topic was under discussion, upon which, owing to the great issues involved, Congress for eight weeks was unable to come to a decision. It was proposed to open the ports of the Colonies to free trade ; and as this was very properly considered one of the preliminary steps towards independence, the conservative members were unremitting in their efforts to prevent it. About the middle of January this question had been raised, when Harrison, Morris, Lynch, Samuel Adams, and Sherman were made a committee to consider under what regulations and restrictions the trade of the United Colonies ought to be carried on after the 1st of March next. The liberties of a continent and the various commercial interests of a vast line of coast were involved in the decision. Their report was not ready until the 5th of February, when it was read and referred to the 8th, then to be considered in committee of the whole. No action was taken on that day, the subject being evidently postponed through the efforts of the proprietary interests and those who were opposed to anything like bold measures, and feared the determined policy of the committee and their friends. It was again referred to the 14th, despite the efforts of the committee, who by that time had hearty co-operators in John Adams and Elbridge Gerry, now just arrived from Massachusetts. It was debated for several days, particularly on the 16th, when Wythe was its chief champion. The measure did not succeed, however, until early in April. While this question was pending, an equally important one was brought forward by Samuel Adams. Washington, seeing the danger of making short enlistments and raising a new army for each campaign, had earnestly urged upon

Congress an increase of bounty, and that the soldiers should be enlisted for the war. The time of enlistment had hitherto been limited, under the hope of a speedy reconciliation. Adams had long been convinced of the fallacy of such anticipations, and, desiring to see an army based upon thorough military principles, raised the question with the hope of rendering the service more efficient, and of meeting the desires of Washington. But he was opposed by a large number, and even Sherman and John Adams were not with him. After what appears to have been a lengthy debate, the subject was dropped, and the application of the General passed unheeded.¹ As Samuel Adams was proverbially opposed to standing armies, and excessively jealous of military power, both before and after the Revolution, these efforts evince his willingness to surrender to present necessities opinions of long standing. He was a member, at this time, of some minor committees for the exportation of naval stores, the parole of prisoners, and other subjects only important now as indicating the frequency and nature of his employment in Congress.

As the spring advanced, the opposition to royal authority grew stronger in the Colonies where the feeling against independence had been most conspicuous; and Samuel Adams's measure for the disarming of disaffected persons was now made more specific in its application by the following resolution: —

Resolved, That it be recommended to the several Assemblies, Conventions, and Committees, or Councils of Safety of the United Colonies immediately to cause all persons to be disarmed within their respective Colonies who are notoriously disaffected to the cause of America, or who have not associated, and shall refuse to associate, to defend by arms these United Colonies against the hostile attempts of the British fleets and armies; and to apply the arms taken from such persons in each respective Colony, in the first place, to the arming the Continental troops raised in said Colony; in the

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 316.

next, to the arming such troops as are raised by the Colony for its own defence, and the residue to be applied to the arming the associators; that the arms when taken be appraised by indifferent persons, and such as are applied to the arming the Continental troops be paid for by the Congress, and the residue by the respective Assemblies, Conventions, or Councils, or Committees of Safety.”¹

The critical condition of affairs imperatively called for the passage of this resolution, and it was, perhaps, as effective a measure as Congress was prepared to adopt. John Adams, indeed, and several others, dreading confusion among so many rulers, urged Congress to make the resolution more general and to advise the people to assume all the powers of government.² Yet the Loyalists apparently considered that this resolution assumed them in an offensive manner; and it was in reality another step towards independence; for these “powers of government” once assumed, there was the less likelihood of the people ever receding from the position thus boldly taken; and it is probable that Samuel Adams, in urging the measure, took all these points into consideration. Rather than risk reactionary movements, it was better perhaps to push hesitating communities into positions which of their own free will they might not have assumed. The task of advocating such a plan in Congress was no less delicate than its execution. In New York, difficulties had already arisen from the resolution of Congress to disarm the Tories in Queen’s County,³ objections being made to the introduction of troops without the consent of the Colony. General Lee, in carrying out the intentions of Congress and the orders of Washington, had overstepped his authority by attempting to expel the Tories from New York, and his hasty, overbearing conduct had given offence. Beyond the temporary troubles caused by this act, the procedure of Congress was productive of the happiest

¹ Journals of Congress, March 14, 1776.

² John Adams’s Works, III. 34.

³ Journals of Congress, Jan. 3, 1776.

results where dangerous Loyalist majorities existed. It was time, when the enemy was burning towns and ravaging the sea-coast, to counteract by other means than those of mere persuasion and argument the open warfare now fully in progress. With the outbreak of hostilities, Samuel Adams had been in favor of resorting with all prudent speed to the *ultima ratio*, for which he had been prepared years before most of his fellow-members had regarded a separation from Great Britain as at all probable. He still continued to urge independence in the public press, in articles which, if collected, would make a volume of logical, convincing arguments. They cannot, consistently with the plan of the present work, be here introduced, but the few already quoted serve as examples. On the 6th of March, as "Candidus," after denouncing the continued perfidy of Great Britain to the Colonies, and proving the inconsistency and folly of further dependence, he again assails the irresolute policy of the moderate party in America.

"It remaining, therefore, that the American States are neither the Provinces, Colonies, nor children of Great Britain, any more than of Holland, Ireland, or Germany, and that from their very settlement Britain meant rather to milk than suckle them, the pretended right to control their manufactures and commerce, to sell them lands at a heavy purchase, and subject to an enslaving quit-rent which were in great part gained by their own blood and treasure, is founded in presumption of superior force rather than solid reason. Luxury (and the search of ways and means to support it) is arrived to such a pitch in Britain, that the junto who have usurped a tyrannic power want Provinces to drain off wealth as their patterns, the debauched Romans, had. Many are found so base as to be willing their countrymen should become tributary to such vultures, if they might have a small pittance for gathering the tax; yea, even on condition it were demanded at the point of the bayonet. Here is the true foundation of the claim of Great Britain, and here is the undeniable cause of the support this claim finds in America! What, then, are the honest, industrious, and independent freemen of America to do in this case? My guide I have so long followed tells us,

Declare independence immediately ! Issue a manifesto, containing a full view of our rights, our grievances, and the unwearied applications we have made for their redress. Apply to the state of whose readiness and power to assist us we have undoubted assurance. A neglect to improve the openings given us for that purpose may inspire those statesmen with resentment, and incite them to accept overtures from our enemies, and then we may indeed become provinces ! If we can withstand the tyrant of Britain without allies, we can incontestably better withstand him with an ally that has ever commanded a very complacent behavior from him. This ally can wish for nothing more than such a share of our commerce as shall be convenient to both parties ; and as that must be rather a gain than a loss to us, we must be stupid beyond conception to delay the measure.

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“Circumstances have strangely co-operated to open scenes no human foresight could have viewed in their full latitude. And what is there now wanting to complete the triumph of the friends of human nature, but a little fortitude, patience, and perseverance ? All Europe must allow that, while America was in the greatest good humor with her old mother, a scheme was laid to keep up a large standing army in her capital towns, and to tax her at pleasure for the support of it. They see that, from time to time, the most fraudulent and violent measures have been taken to support their entirely unprecedented claim, till at last, drained of their national troops, they have applied for assistance to other nations. By the law of nations we were discharged from our allegiance the moment the army was posted among us, or a single farthing taken from us in like manner ; either of these being fundamental subversions of the Constitution. It remains, then, entirely with ourselves to have ample justice done to us. We have nothing to do but to declare off, and appeal to the *droit des gens*. A very respectable power has given us as unequivocal proofs as can be wished of her disposition to right us.

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“I will venture to affirm that our ambitious master at length begins to fear, in good earnest, that the string drawn too tight will break, and leave all his Colonies to make new bargains for themselves. Obstinate and mulish as he is, he cannot longer persuade

himself that two such potent communities as France and North America will neglect such an opportunity to pay themselves the prodigious sums he has damaged them in the two past years."

Boston had lately been evacuated by the British troops. Samuel Adams, in his letters to his friends in Massachusetts warns them against the possibility of the return of the enemy in the summer, and urges a defence of the whole New England sea-coast. It was with anxious interest that he learned the particulars of the event and the condition of his family. During the tedious months that the siege of Boston had continued, his residence in Purchase Street was occupied by royal officers, who had wantonly mutilated the interior, destroyed the outhouses, and, with spiteful hatred of the proprietor, had cut into the window-panes obscene and blasphemous writings, some of them ridiculing his religious habits. Caricatures were displayed upon the walls, and the garden was completely ruined. On entering the house after the departure of its late occupants, a firebrand was found on the floor, perhaps fallen there from the fireplace accidentally, as no intention is known to have been entertained by the enemy of burning the town. The family returned, with the design of occupying the house, soon after the departure of the British, but they found the premises uninhabitable. Many windows were broken out, doors unhinged and burned for fuel, and every species of wanton destruction was visible. Mr. Adams was never pecuniarily able thereafter to repair the ravages of these Vandals, and the family went to live in Dedham, where they resided until 1778.

It was in this month that Samuel Adams had the misfortune to lose his esteemed friend Governor Ward, now a member of the Rhode Island delegation, who died at Philadelphia on the 26th. America in that death lost an able advocate and one of the most earnest supporters of a vigorous policy. He was particularly intimate with Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee; and this trio were obnoxious

to a party headed by Hancock, and counting among their number Harrison, Duane, and Dickinson, who, it would seem by John Adams's brief reminiscence, were adversaries of these gentlemen; and the narrator himself did not escape "their jealousy and malignity." Hopkins and Walcott of Rhode Island, and Samuel Adams were appointed a committee to superintend the funeral, which was attended by Congress, the Committee of Safety of Pennsylvania, and other public bodies of Philadelphia, who were invited by the committee.

John Adams, recalling in after years this animosity between Hancock and his party and the Adamses, Ward, and Lee, stated that his kinsman had become very bitter against Hancock, and spoke of him with great asperity in private circles, but gives no explanation of the cause. Hancock, like several others of the distinguished characters of the Revolution, had been brought forward by Samuel Adams, whose mission seems to have been, not only to hasten American independence, but to push into prominence the instruments to aid in the great work. Gordon, describing Hancock's first step in public life, says in his History, for which he gathered the materials during the Revolution, and while moving among the multitudes who enacted it:—

"When the choice of members for Boston to represent the town in the next General Court was approaching [in the spring of 1766], Mr. John Rowe, a merchant who had been active on the side of liberty in matters of trade, was thought of by some influential persons. Mr. Samuel Adams artfully nominated a different one, by asking, with his eyes looking to Mr. Hancock's house, 'Is there not *another John* that may do better?' The hint took. Mr. John Hancock's uncle was dead, and had left him a very considerable fortune. Mr. Samuel Adams judged that the fortune would give credit and support to the cause of liberty, that popularity would please the possessor, and that he might be easily secured by prudent management, and might make a conspicuous figure in the band of patriots."¹

¹ Gordon, I. 207.

The same inference is drawn from the reminiscence of John Adams, in which he narrates the outlines of a conversation between himself and Samuel Adams on the day of this election, when the latter pointed with peculiar meaning to the house whose owner had been enlisted with his fortune in the public cause.¹ Hancock proved a very untrustworthy recruit, and we have already seen the difficulties which Adams experienced in contending with his wayward but dangerous opposition. The contemporary evidence of this has already been given in the years prior to the Revolution, and the facts were perfectly well known to many who survived that event into the present century. The private, confidential correspondence of Hutchinson with the Ministry places the point beyond dispute. The historian Allen, who personally knew most of the prominent New England statesmen of the Revolution, and whose father himself was a contemporary worker with them in the public councils of Rhode Island, says of the relative positions of Adams and Hancock and the placing of the latter in the Presidential chair of Congress:—

“Mr. Hancock was certainly not the man upon whom the unbiassed voice of Congress would have fallen. He had been early enlisted in the cause of the people by the superior discernment of Mr. Samuel Adams, who foresaw that his large fortune would add respectability to the little band of patriots. His manners were agreeable and his address prepossessing; but he had neither talents nor solidity sufficient to direct any affair of importance. Under the wing of Mr. Adams, he had acquired considerable popularity, the love of which, more than attachment to the great principles of opposition to the ministerial measures, had secured him against an acquiescence in the artful propositions of Governor Hutchinson, with whom he continued to be *too intimate* until the departure of that officer for England.”²

Elevated by the agency of the Adamses to the Presiden-

¹ John Adams's Works, X. 260.

² Allen's American Revolution, I. 253.

tial chair, Hancock now enjoyed the opportunity of display and of courting popularity, which had always been his distinguishing trait. His patriotism was not doubted, for he had already signified his willingness for the destruction of his native town, where he was the most considerable proprietor, if the public welfare demanded the act: but beyond the duties of President, involving much correspondence, which was mainly performed by a secretary, Hancock was not the promoter of any of the successive steps which led to independence. He was capable of noble sentiments, and his profuse generosity was only limited by his means. Pecuniarily, no man in the Revolution sacrificed so much. His courteous address and elegant equipage, added to the ostentation which wealth enabled him to exercise, made his influence very powerful. Proscribed with Samuel Adams, his name conveyed an idea of importance, which attached more to his social and political position than to the exertion of any statesmanlike abilities. Gordon, who personally witnessed his manner of living, says of him:—

“When Mr. Hancock was first elected, in consequence of Mr. Peyton Randolph’s being under a necessity of returning to Virginia, it was expected that, as soon as the latter repaired again to Congress, the former would resign. Of this he was reminded by one of his Massachusetts brethren when Mr. Randolph got back; but the charms of Presidency made him deaf to the private advice of his colleagues, and no one could, with propriety, move for his removal that the other might be restored. In the early stage of his Presidency he acted upon republican principles, but afterwards he inclined to the aristocracy of the New York delegates, connected himself with them, and became their favorite. He at length fell in so fully with their plans that a Rhode Island delegate lectured him upon it, and told him that he had forgotten the errand on which he was sent to Congress, and advised him to return to his constituents. This versatility in political sentiments, though it chagrined, did not surprise his Massachusetts brethren; for they remembered that, at a certain period, he was upon the point of joining the Tory Club at Boston (as it was called), whereby he alarmed the Liberty party

most amazingly, and obliged them to exert all their influence to prevent so dangerous and mortifying an event."¹

The present coldness had probably commenced soon after the reassembling of Congress in September of the past year. It was not long before the fact became noised abroad, and was industriously circulated with exaggerations by the Tories, one of whom gravely published "intelligence of great credibility," which had lately arrived in Massachusetts from Philadelphia, that Adams had made a motion in Congress for the expulsion of Hancock for holding principles incompatible with independency.² Still another Loyalist writer says: —

"An irreconcilable difference has certainly taken place between those *eminent worthies*, John Hancock and Samuel Adams, Esquires. Fortune, in one of her highest frolics, elevated those malignant stars to the zenith of power. The baleful influence of their conjunction in the western political hemisphere has produced direful effects; but when the lunacy of the former is separated from the villanies of the latter, the deluge of destruction, that was certainly, though slowly, rolling after them, will rapidly come on and overwhelm them and their infatuated votaries in prodigious ruin."³

Gordon's statement does not differ materially from that of other contemporary writers, and it is not surprising that Samuel Adams should at last have found the conduct of his colleague beyond his patience to bear, especially at a time when it jeopardized alarmingly the inestimable prize now almost in their grasp. A flash of this mortification is seen in the confidential letter to James Warren, already given; and it is probably to Samuel Adams that Gordon refers as the colleague who expostulated with Hancock on some occasion when his course excited more attention and was of more hurtful influence than usual. Perhaps Governor Ward was the Rhode Island delegate mentioned by

¹ Gordon, III. 20, 21.

² "Cæsar," in the *Middlesex Gazette*, Dec. 26.

³ *New Jersey Gazette*, Jan. 14, 1776 (*Moore's Diary of the Revolution*, II. 7).

the historian, for John Adams speaks of him as one of those who were particularly disliked by Hancock. Gordon's account agrees with that of the celebrated "Laco," in 1789. Though he wrote at a period of remarkable political agitation in Massachusetts, and entertained a settled animosity to Hancock, there is evidence of truth in those bold and able essays, which made them all the more obnoxious to the party against which they were levelled. "Laco" is now admitted to have been Stephen Higginson, a gentleman of high social and political reputation, and for some time a colleague of Elbridge Gerry in Congress. He had been intimately acquainted with the career of Hancock from his first entrance into public life, and he freely discusses his political course, particularly in the present memorable Congress.

"Let us now see what part he acted as a member of Congress, and how far he contributed to effect our national independence.

"Mr. Hancock was happy in having for his colleagues men famous for their ability, their virtues, and their patriotism, — men who were capable of extensive views and actions, and who were resolved for political purposes to support him and make him conspicuous. They accordingly obtained his appointment to the chair of Congress. But, being elevated to the highest point through their agency, he thought them no longer necessary to this importance, and from the vanity and caprice inherent in his nature, he attached himself to the Tories who were then in Congress. These men had perceived his love of flattery; they plied him closely and grossly, and they detached him from his colleagues, and led him to take a part in direct opposition to them and to the feelings and interests of his constituents. In all questions for decisive measures against Britain he hung back, and very much contributed to obstruct the declaration of independence. The glare of Southern manners and the parade of courtly living engaged his affections, and he ever appeared to condemn the manly simplicity and firmness of the delegates from New England. Thus was a member of Massachusetts duped by the insidious Tories; he was urged by them who, by assiduous attentions, led his vanity to give up the best interests of

America, and to hazard even our independence itself, to increase his own popularity, or rather to gain new admirers.

"When the important hour arrived that was to give birth to our country as a nation ; when the pulse of his colleagues, as well as majority of Congress and of the people at large, beat high for independence, and it was found the important question could no longer be put off, Mr. Hancock then gave a vote in favor of the measure and put his official signature to that memorable act of Congress, the Declaration of Independence."¹

"Laco" was actuated, it is true, by political hostility to Hancock, but he manifestly wrote from an acquaintance with facts known to many persons of that day, and in bold opposition to a fond party feeling which was disposed to cover up Hancock's failings. He challenges contradiction "I shall not," says he, "on the one hand fear to animadvert freely, nor on the other lose sight of decency and candor" and in the series of essays which, in that political campaign were never successfully answered, save in a general way "Laco" pursued his inquiries, and fairly showed that American independence was due to no line of policy or original idea of John Hancock. Almost as much is said, indeed, by John Adams in his Autobiography, where he describes the opposition of Hancock to the New England policy, and his affiliation with gentlemen of the opposite party. This has already been alluded to, but, in the same connection, the writer again says, touching the enmity shown to Richard Henry Lee :—

"Mr. Samuel Adams and myself were very intimate with Mr. Lee, and he agreed perfectly with us in the great system of our policy, and by his means we kept a majority of the delegates of Virginia with us. But Harrison, Pendleton, and some others showed their jealousy of this intimacy plainly enough at times. Harrison consequently courted Mr. Hancock and some other of our colleagues, but we had now a majority, and gave ourselves no trouble about their little intrigues."²

¹ Boston Independent Chronicle, Feb. 21, 1789.

² John Adams's Works, III. 32, 35.

These remarks, which confirm the accounts of Gordon and "Laco," have special reference to the favor shown by the persons mentioned to the crafty and dangerous scheme of Lord Drummond, who desired to obtain delay, and consequently to insure the defeat of the threatened independence by an unauthorized suggestion to Congress to send a deputation to England for "liberal terms founded in equity and candor." John Adams also, in the following year, makes particular mention of the guard of light horse accompanying Hancock in his movements, who excited the enmity of the innkeepers along their route by refusing to pay for their entertainment.¹ Whatever may have been the motives of Hancock in this display, so entirely at variance with the character and institutions of his native Province, there can be no doubt that the statements of Gordon and "Laco," supported as they were by the additional contemporary evidence of John Adams, are perfectly reliable. Posterity, therefore, will scarcely wonder at differences between two such characters. But while, as will be hereafter shown, Samuel Adams observed a dignified silence respecting a subject the discussion of which could only injure the public interests, Hancock, with studied malignity, frequently aspersed his colleague, and did not scruple to misrepresent him on important questions. The vacillations of Hancock had already jeopardized the cause, and his vanity and peevishness had once before produced an alienation between himself and Adams, of nearly two years' duration, at a time peculiarly critical to America, when her sons were settling the original principles which should guide their future action. These episodes of hostility might occur at any time in dealing with a person of Hancock's irritable disposition. Adams, who thoroughly knew himself, never alluded to them, unless when approached on the subject by others.

¹ John Adams's Works, II. 441.

CHAPTER XL.

Opinions of Adams on the War. — His Extensive Correspondence. — Impatience at the continued Delay of Independence. — His Letters in Favor of a Declaration. — Scorns the Idea of Royal Peace Commissioners. — Advocates a Formal Renunciation of British Authority by each Colony. — The Medical Committee.

THE military operations in Virginia and the Carolina where the descent of Clinton and the defeat of the Loyalists at Moore's Creek Bridge had invested the Southern war with rising importance, engaged the attention of Congress early in March. Samuel Adams was appointed on a committee with Johnson, Jay, Sergeant, and Sherman,¹ to "take into consideration the state of the Colonies in the Southern Department." General Lee was in Philadelphia while the Committee were deliberating upon this subject, and soon after the appointment he was directed by Congress to repair immediately to the Southern Department and take command of the forces there. On the 25th, the committee laid before Congress the condition of the Continental army in Virginia and South Carolina. They represented the probability of an early attack upon the Southern Colonies in the spring and the laborious and expensive duties which had thus far devolved upon that section. On their motion, Congress authorized the raising of two additional battalions by the Committee of Safety of South Carolina at the expense of the continent. The Colonial battalions of Virginia were placed on the same footing, and additional muster-masters were appointed.² During the next week after this report was submitted, and while its suggestions were actively carried out, Samuel Adams wrote to one of his correspondents in Boston: —

¹ Journals of Congress, March 9, 1776.

² *Id.*, March 25, 1776.

“Notwithstanding shame and confusion attended the measures of the British Court the last summer and fall, yet, by the latest accounts received from our friends in that country, it appears that they are determined to persevere. They then reckoned (in December) upon having twenty thousand troops in America the next campaign. Their estimate was thus : six thousand in Boston, seven thousand to go from Ireland, three thousand Highlanders raising under General Fraser, and the rest to be recruits. Of the seven thousand from Ireland, we are told that three thousand were to sail for Virginia and North Carolina, and were expected to be on the coast in March or the beginning of April. It is probable, then, that the Ministry have not quitted the plan which they had agreed upon above a twelvemonth ago, which was to take possession of New York, make themselves masters of Hudson River and the lakes, thereby securing Canada and the Indians, cut off communication between the Colonies northward and southward of Hudson’s River, and thus to subdue the former in hopes of instigating the negroes to make the others an easy prey. Our success, a great part of which they had not then heard of, it is to be hoped has rendered this plan impracticable ; yet it is probable that the main body of these troops is designed to carry it into execution, while the reserve are to make a diversion in the Southern Colonies. These Colonies, I think, are sufficiently provided for. Our safety very much depends upon our vigilance and success in New York and Canada. Our enemies did not neglect Hudson’s River the last year. We know that one of their transports arrived at New York ; but Gage, seized with a panic, ordered that and the other transports destined for that place to Boston. I have ever thought it to be their favorite plan, not only because it appeared to me to be dictated by sound policy, but because, from good intelligence which I received from England, they revived it after it had been broken in upon by Gage, and sent Tryon to New York to remove every obstacle in the way of landing the troops there, and to co-operate with Carlton in the execution of it.

“The King’s troops have now abandoned Boston, on which I sincerely congratulate you. We have not yet heard what course they have steered. I judge, for Halifax. They may return if they hear that you are off your guard ; or probably they may go up the St. Lawrence River as early as the season will admit of it. Does it not

behoove New England to secure herself from future invasions while the attention of Congress is turned to New York and Canada. We seem to have the game in our own hands. If we do not play well, misfortune will be the effect of our negligence and folly.”¹

General Lee, on assuming command of the Southern Department, with his characteristic anxiety in matters of personal profit, soon managed to make himself the subject of correspondence between the members; and, during the summer, J. Rutledge wrote to Samuel Adams and Hopkins in relation to the bill for the indemnification of the General which had already passed Congress.² Rutledge urged them to make Lee more certain that he would be cared for pecuniarily, and doubtless both Adams and Hopkins endeavored to secure the services of an officer then considered indispensable to the cause.

Nearly all the letters and general business relating to the war in the North were referred to committees of which Adams was a member. It is to be deplored that the secretary has given only a brief mention of the circumstances attending the appointment of many committees. Samuel Adams was always accounted a marvel of industry, especially of committees in public bodies. He worked incessantly, often denying himself necessary rest, and taking, as usual, the lead in the preparation of reports, the writing of letters, and in general affairs where intense labor was required.

The writings of Adams in the press, urging a declaration of independence and a confederation of the Colonies,—or rather “States,” as he had now accustomed himself to speak of them,—and an alliance with France, strongly as the advocate these points, are not more eloquently worded than his letters to his confidential friends. Correspondence and public essays alike tend to one point,—a persistent contest with the weak, dilatory opponents of every act which might stand in the way of reconciliation. Hundreds of his letters

¹ Samuel Adams to Samuel Cooper, April 3, 1776.

² Moore's *Treason of General Lee*, p. 33.

which had been preserved even after the commencement of the present century, were lost or submitted to improper hands and never returned. Large quantities he himself put out of existence, with a generous consideration for the safety of others. John Adams says, many years after the death of his kinsman :—

“The letters he wrote and received, — where are they? I have seen him at Mrs. Yard’s, in Philadelphia, when he was about to leave Congress, cut up with his scissors whole bundles of letters in atoms that could never be reunited, and throw them out of the window to be scattered by the winds. This was in summer, when he had no fire. As we were on terms of perfect intimacy, I have joked him, perhaps rudely, upon his anxious caution. His answer was, ‘Whatever becomes of me, my friends shall never suffer by my negligence.’”¹

He cared nothing for the credit of having originated important measures, and regarded with indifference the preservation of any memorials with which in the future to emblazon his name. Such men, though not insensible to an honorable fame, possess the true test of greatness, which can calmly await the award of succeeding generations, on whose fiat they may rely when the questions of their own days have, like themselves, become subjects for history. But the benefactor of his race may be insensible to fame, while pursuing his grand aim, and yet not feel an unworthy disregard for the opinion of posterity, for whose happiness he has labored. It is, however, that very forgetfulness of self which enables the reformer or leader to concentrate his efforts upon one object. The greatest works of genius have been those on which their authors wrought from an innate love or reverence for the subject, rather than for the reputation to be gained ; and posterity perpetuates longest those achievements which spring, not from a desire to secure its attention, but to carry out a great and worthy purpose. They are not the

¹ John Adams to William Tudor, June 5, 1817.

surest of being remembered by the rest of the world who think the most of themselves. The papers of many celebrated men contain letters which prudence or a regard for the reputation of the writer renders it expedient to suppress; but among all those written by Samuel Adams, which have been gathered from every source, there is not one which cannot be held up to the full light of day, and its motives laid open to scrutiny. The reason is obvious. He never committed to paper what his sense of justice and propriety did not indorse. His opinions on all the great subjects which occurred in his lifetime will be found consistently and boldly expressed. Some of his letters to his friends, written in 1776, a few months previous to the Declaration of Independence, have been recovered, and, now arranged in their proper places, will serve to illustrate the tenor of the whole, and the character of the patriot who could ill brook the vexatious policy which delayed the consummation of the grand object of his life. The royal commissioners to be appointed by the Ministry to restore peace were regarded by many as certain to heal the bleeding wounds of America; but the British statesmen who claimed unlimited power over the Colonies failed to comprehend the vital point of justice in the demands of the people for equal government; and the hope of peace through such envoys was founded upon no sound principles. Samuel Adams was among those who saw through the flimsy veil, and he openly denounced the scheme and its inevitable results. He thought it an additional reason for urging an immediate separation from Britain, for it confirmed him all the more in his opinion of the relentless determination of the Crown and Ministry to subjugate the Colonies. Several of his friends in Massachusetts, occupying less conspicuous positions, were equally desirous of independence, and with such he appears most frequently to have corresponded. Joseph Hawley, jealous for his country's redemption, wrote to Adams from Watertown, urging "an immediate, explicit, and the firm-

est confederation and proclamation of independence," and James Warren was no less solicitous. He writes to his "dear friend," the Rev. Dr. Cooper:—

"The British Court solicited the assistance of Russia; but we are informed they failed of it through the interposition of France, by means of Sweden. The ostensible reason on the part of Russia was, that there was no cartel settled between Great Britain and America; the want of which will make every power reluctant at lending them troops. France is attentive to this struggle, and wishes for a separation of the two countries. I am in no doubt that she would, with cheerfulness, openly lend her aid to promote it, if America would declare herself free and independent; for I think it easy to see what great, though different effects, it would have in both those nations. Britain would have it no longer in her power to oppress.

"Is not America already independent? Why, then, not declare it? Upon whom was she ever supposed to be dependent but upon that nation whose barbarous usage of her, and that in multiplied instances and for a long time, has rendered it absurd ever to put confidence in it, and with which she is at this time in open war? Can nations at war be said to be dependent either upon the other? I ask you again, why not declare for independence? Because, say some, it will forever shut the door of reconciliation. Upon what terms will Britain be reconciled to America? If we may take the confiscating act of Parliament, or the King's proclamation for our rule to judge by, she will be reconciled upon our abjectly submitting to tyranny, and asking and receiving pardon for submitting to it. Will this redound to the honor or safety of America? Surely, no. By such a reconciliation, she would not only be in the most shameful manner acknowledging the tyranny, but most wickedly, as far as would be in her power, prevent her posterity from ever hereafter resisting it."¹

It is evident from this letter that Adams had accustomed himself to regard the Colonies as a separate nation, at war with Great Britain. The patriot divine to whom he wrote fully acquiesced in these sentiments, as did thousands in

¹ Samuel Adams to Samuel Cooper, April 3, 1776.

New England, who anxiously awaited the movements of Congress.

"The people here," replied Dr. Cooper, "almost universally agree with you in your political sentiments. They say that name do not alter things: that the moment we determined to defend ourselves against the most injurious violence of Britain, we declared for independence; i. e. like any free people attacked, we would either be totally subdued or be at liberty to make our own terms."¹

Replying to this letter, Mr. Adams says:—

"The idea of independence spreads far and wide among the Colonies. Many of the leading men see the absurdity of supposing that allegiance is due to a sovereign who has already thrown us out of his protection. South Carolina has lately assumed a new government. The convention of North Carolina has unanimously agreed to do the same, and appointed a committee to prepare and lay before them a proper form. They have also revoked certain instructions which tied the hands of their delegates here. Virginia whose Convention is to meet on the 3d of next month, will follow the lead. The body of the people of Maryland are firm. Some of the principal members of their Convention, I am inclined to believe are timid or lukewarm; but an occurrence has lately fallen out in that Colony, which will probably give an agreeable turn to their affairs. Of this I will inform you at a future time, when I may be more particularly instructed concerning it.² The lower counties in Delaware are a small people, but well affected in the common cause.

"In this popular and wealthy Colony political parties run high. The newspapers are full of the matter, but I think I may assure you that 'Common Sense' prevails among the people. A law has lately passed in the Assembly here for increasing the number of Representatives, and to-morrow they are to come to a choice in this

¹ Dr. Cooper to Samuel Adams, Waltham, April 18, 1776. .

² This may have related to the treason of Dr. Zubley, one of the Georgia delegates, whose secret correspondence with the Governor of that Province was announced to Congress by Mr. Chase, which is supposed to have induced Maryland to rescind its restrictions upon its delegates, leaving them to exercise their own judgment on the question of independence.

city and divers of the counties. By this means, it is said, the representation of the Colony will be more equal. I am told that a very popular gentleman, who is a candidate for one of the back counties, has been in danger of losing his election, because it was reported among the electors that he had declared his mind in this city against independence. I know the political creed of that gentleman. It is, so far as relates to a right of the British Parliament to make laws binding the Colonies in any case whatever, exactly correspondent with your own. I mention this anecdote to give you an idea of the jealousy of the people and their attention to this point. The Jerseys are agitating the great question. It is with them rather a matter of prudence, whether to determine till some others have done it before them. A gentleman of that Colony tells me that at least one half of them have New England blood running in their veins. Be this as it may, their sentiments and manners are, I believe, similar to those of New England. I forbear to say anything of New York, for I confess I am not able to form any opinion of them. I lately received a letter from a friend in that Colony, informing me that they would soon come to the expediency of taking up government; but to me, it is uncertain what they will do. I think they are at least as unenlightened in the nature and importance of our political disputes as any one of the United Colonies. I have not mentioned our little sister Georgia, but I believe she is as warmly engaged in the cause as any of us, and will do as much as can be reasonably expected of her.

“I was very solicitous last fall to have government set up by the people in every Colony. It appeared to me necessary for many reasons. When this is done,—and I am inclined to think it will be soon,—the Colonies will feel their independence, the way will be prepared for a confederation, and one government may be prepared with the consent of the whole,—a distinct state composed of all the Colonies, with a common Legislature for great and general purposes. This I was in hopes would have been the work of the last winter. I am disappointed, but I bear it tolerably well. I am disposed to believe that everything is ordered for the best; and if I do not find myself chargeable with neglect, I am not greatly chagrined when things do not go exactly according to my mind. Indeed, I have the happiness of believing that what I most earnestly wish for will in due time be effected. We cannot make events: our busi-

ness is wisely to improve them. There has been much to do to confirm doubting friends and to fortify the timid. It requires time to bring honest men to think and determine alike, even in unimportant matters. Mankind are governed more by their feelings than by reason. Events which excite those feelings will produce wonderful events. The Boston Port Bill suddenly wrought an union of the Colonies which could not be brought about by the industry of years in reasoning on the necessity of it for the common safety. Since the memorable 19th of June, one event has brought another on, till Boston sees her deliverance from the more than savage troops, upon which the execrable tyrant so much relied for the completion of his horrid conspiracies, and America has furnished herself with more than seventy battalions for her defence. The burning of Norfolk and the hostilities committed in North Carolina have kindled the resentment of our Southern brethren, who once thought their Eastern friends hot-headed and rash. Now, indeed, the tone is altered, and it is said the coolness and moderation of the one is necessary to allay the heat of the other. There is a reason that would induce one even to wish for the speedy arrival of the British troops that are expected at the Southward. I think our friends are well prepared for them, and one battle would do more towards a declaration of independence than a long chain of conclusive arguments in a Provincial Convention or the Continental Congress."¹

Another letter written in this month, in answer to that received from Joseph Hawley urging on to independence, is a remarkable specimen of the sententious and peculiarly direct way which Adams generally adopted when impressing his own ideas upon others. The difficulties constantly thrown in the way of independence, the combinations against the more resolute of the New England members by some of their own delegates, as well as by others from the Middle States, and the persistent arguments in favor of conciliation with a power bent upon the destruction of liberty, demanded all the patience of Samuel Adams to meet and dispel. Even by some of the chief members of Congress, the idea of inde-

¹ Samuel Adams to Samuel Cooper, April 30, 1776.

pendence was continually put aside, and the illusory hope of redress fondly indulged. While Samuel Adams, with the faith of prophecy, had been cherishing the idea, and magnifying its importance as the Revolution advanced, John Adams and Jefferson, up to the last moment, turned away from the attempt, except as a final resort to preserve their liberties. Franklin, when he parted with Burke on his last lay in London, looked forward to independence as a lamentable event which gave him the greatest concern. Washington, during the first Congress, denied that it was the wish or interest of the Colonies, "separately or collectively, to set up for independence"; and up to the time of his appointment as Commander-in-Chief he was desirous of the restoration of peace on an honorable basis. After the battle of Lexington, Joseph Warren desired reconciliation founded upon the maintenance of Colonial rights. "This," said he, "I most heartily wish, as I feel a warm affection for the parent state."¹ These are only a few of the instances among the principal men of the times. Samuel Adams alone saw the promised land, and he was ready to cross the border long in advance of his fellow-members. His arguments, as expressed in his letters, were probably the outline of those used in his conversations. His force of character and consummate tact in studying human nature, gave him a power of persuasion which some of his friends in the Provincial and Continental Congress have mentioned as an important agent in leading to the Declaration.

"I am perfectly satisfied," he says to Hawley, "with the reasons you offer to show the necessity of a public and explicit declaration of independence. I cannot conceive what good reason can be assigned against it. Will it widen the breach? This would be a strange question after we have raised armies and fought battles with British troops; set up an American navy; permitted the inhabitants of these Colonies to fit out armed vessels to capture the ships, &c.,

¹ Sparks's Washington, I. 121. Bancroft, VII. 263, 301, 341, 376; VIII. 31.

belonging to any of the inhabitants of Great Britain, declaring them the enemies of the United Colonies; and torn into shivers their acts of trade, by allowing commerce subject to regulations to be made by ourselves with the people of all countries, except such as are subject to the British King. It cannot surely, after all this, be imagined that we consider ourselves, or mean to be considered by others, in any other state than that of independence. But moderate Whigs are disgusted with our mentioning the word! Sensible Tories are better politicians. They knew that no foreign power can consistently yield comfort to rebels, or enter into any kind of treaty with these Colonies, till they declare themselves free and independent. They are in hopes, by our protracting this decisive step, we shall grow weary of the war, and that, for want of foreign connections and assistance, we shall be driven to the necessity of acknowledging the tyrant, and submitting to the tyranny. These are the hopes and expectations of the Tories, while moderate gentlemen are flattering themselves with the prospect of reconciliation, when the commissioners that are talked of shall arrive. A mere amusement, indeed! What terms of reconciliation are we to expect from them that will be acceptable to the people of America? Will the King of Great Britain empower his commissioners even to promise the repeal of all or any of his obnoxious and oppressive acts? Can he do it? or if he could, has he ever yet discovered a disposition which evinced the least degree of that princely virtue, clemency?"¹

Again, to James Warren he gives an idea of his every-day arguments in favor of independence, and reveals his impatience of the continual opposition.

"I have not yet congratulated you on the unexpected and happy change of our affairs, in the removal of the royal army from Boston. Our worthy friend, Major H——, in his letter to me, declines giving me joy on this occasion; he thinks it best to put off the ceremony till the Congress shall proclaim independency. In my opinion, however, it becomes us to rejoice, and religiously to acknowledge the greatness of the Supreme Being who in this instance hath signally appeared for us. Our countrymen are too wise to suf-

¹ Samuel Adams to Joseph Hawley, April 15, 1776.

fer this favorable event to put them off their guard. They will fortify the harbor of Boston, still defend the sea-coast, and keep the military spirit universally alive.

“I perfectly agree with the Major in his opinion of the necessity of proclaiming independency. The salvation of this country depends upon its being done speedily. I am anxious to have it done. We are told that commissioners are coming out to offer us such terms of reconciliation as we may with safety accept of. Why, then, should we shut the door? This is all amusement. I am disgusted exceedingly when I hear it mentioned. Experience should teach us to pay no regard to it. We know that it has been the constant practice of the King and his junto, ever since the struggle began, to endeavor to make us believe their designs were pacific, while they have been meditating the most destructive plans; and they insult our understandings in endeavoring thus to impose on us, even while they are putting those plans into execution. Can the King repeal or dispense with acts of Parliament? Would he repeal the detestable acts which we have complained of, if it was in his power? Did he ever show a disposition to do acts of justice and redress the grievances of his subjects? Why, then, do gentlemen expect it? They do not scruple to own he is a tyrant! Are they willing to be his slaves, and dependent upon a nation so lost to all sense of liberty and virtue, as to enable and encourage him to act the tyrant? This has been done by the British nation against the remonstrance of common honesty and common sense. They are now doing it, and will continue to do it, until we break the bonds of connection, and publicly avow independence. It is folly for us to suffer ourselves any longer to be amused. Reconciliation upon reasonable terms is no part of their plan. The only alternative is independence or slavery. Their designs still are, as they ever have been, to subjugate us; our unalterable resolution should be to be free. They have attempted to subdue us, but, God be praised! in vain. Their arts may be more dangerous than their arms. Let us, then, renounce all treaty with them upon any score but that of total separation, and, under God, trust our cause to our swords. One of our moderate, prudent Whigs would be startled at what I now write. I do not correspond with such kind of men. You know I never over much-admired them. Their moderation has brought us to this pass; and if they were to be regarded, they

would continue the conflict a century. There are such moderate men here, but their principles are daily growing out of fashion. The child Independence is now struggling for birth. I trust that in a short time it will be brought forth, and, in spite of Pharaoh, all America will hail the dignified stranger."¹

These letters were written during the sitting of the Pennsylvania Legislature, where the contest between the two extreme parties continued, and Dickinson and his friends were still enabled to check the popular movement. The delegates for that Province in Congress had been again instructed to reject any proposition which might lead to a separation,² and the progress towards independence was steadily opposed. But, on the same day that the Pennsylvania Assembly gave these instructions, the Continental Congress itself succeeded in carrying the most important point of the session. This was the report of the committee, consisting of Harrison, Morris, Lynch, Samuel Adams, and Sherman, on the regulations and restrictions of trade. By the Autobiography of John Adams, it appears that this subject, in which, after his return from Massachusetts, he took an active part with the New England delegates, was postponed from day to day by the efforts of the moderate party, who feared the effects of the passage of the report in committee of the whole.³ The debates had extended through a portion of March and April, when, on the 6th of this month, the measure was triumphantly carried by which the thirteen Colonies abolished British custom-houses, prohibited the importation of slaves, and opened their ports to the commerce of the world, excepting those under the dominion of the King of Great Britain.⁴ As a preliminary act of independence, this measure must have been cordially advocated by Samuel Adams. It was in relation to this act that he wrote to Hawley how the "United Colonies had torn into

¹ Samuel Adams to James Warren, April 16, 1776.

² Bancroft, VIII. 325.

³ John Adams's Works, III. 29 - 39.

⁴ Journals of Congress, April 6, 1776.

shivers the British acts of trade"; and, if we may judge by the fervor of his writings, his voice was not silent during the debates on a subject so near to his heart.

On the 10th of May, Congress, after a discussion extending through two days, passed the proposition drawn up by John Adams, recommending the respective Assemblies and Conventions of the United Colonies, where no government sufficient to the exigencies of their affairs had been established, to adopt such government as should, in the opinion of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular and America in general. John Adams soon after reported a preamble to the resolution, which provided for the total suppression of every kind of authority under the Crown, and establishment of the powers of government under the authority of the people of the Colonies, for the defence of their lives, liberties, and properties.¹ In the debate which ensued, Samuel Adams appears as one of the supporters of the resolution. His letters, already quoted, show that he had been personally urging this measure since the autumn of 1775; but as usual, he was before his time. John Adams, who has left on record the headings of the remarks of different members in the present debate, writes for his kinsman: "Our petitions have not been heard, yet answered with fleets and armies, and are to be answered with myrmidons from abroad. The gentleman from New York, Mr. Duane, has not objected to the preamble; but this, that he has not a right to vote for it. We cannot go upon stronger reasons than that the King has thrown us out of his protection. Why should we support a government under his authority?"² It was to John Adams that this proposition and preamble and the passage of both was due, and the measure was justly considered a large stride toward the object now hoped for or feared by the several parties in Congress.

¹ Journals of Congress, May 10 - 14, 1776.

² John Adams's Works, II. 490.

A number of letters from military commanders were referred, during the month of May, to committees of which Samuel Adams was a member; and the recommendations, as shown by the proceedings of Congress, involved some of the most important movements of the war. In all these the committees show a confident reliance upon the wisdom and prudence of Washington, and great readiness to second his advice. Jefferson, Wythe, Samuel Adams, and Rutledge were about this time appointed to prepare "an animated address, to impress the minds of the people with the necessity of now stepping forward to save their country, their freedom, and prosperity."¹ Whatever was submitted by this committee undoubtedly came from the pen of Jefferson, its chairman, who was so soon to present to the world a document unrivalled in beauty of execution and grandeur of sentiment. On the 8th of May a letter of the 5th, from General Washington, with accompanying papers, was laid before Congress, and referred to Samuel Adams, Wythe, Rodney, Richard Henry Lee, and Whipple.² Previous to this time, some correspondence had passed between Washington and Samuel Adams, in relation to the construction of a military road from the Connecticut River to Montreal. Adams had recommended such a road, to which he attached much importance, in reference to future attacks upon Canada; and at the same time he reminded the General of the defenceless condition of Boston, should the British fleet think proper to return in the spring.³ Washington replied favorably to the plan, and wrote to Congress on the subject, advocating the road as proposed by Colonel Jacob Bailey, to whom he had advanced funds to commence the work. The letter represented to Congress the deficiency of arms throughout all the regiments in the North and East;

¹ Secret Journals of Congress, May 28, 1776.

² Journals of Congress, May 8, 1776.

³ Samuel Adams to Washington, March 22, 1776. Washington to Adams, May 15, 1776.

and the committee, in their report, recommended the adoption of all Washington's suggestions.

In the previous month, a number of letters from Washington and Schuyler on military matters of urgent importance¹ were submitted to a committee consisting of Wythe, Harrison, and Samuel Adams,² who soon after reported fully on the subjects intrusted to them.³ One of the resolutions directed the Board of War to order sixty tons of cannon powder and thirty-four tons of musket powder, to be immediately sent to General Schuyler for the use of the Northern army, and the military operations of the General were cordially indorsed. The Massachusetts delegation, in a letter to the President of the Council of that Province, signed by every member, had already proposed plans for removing some of the difficulties of which Washington had been complaining to Congress.⁴

Samuel Adams was also a member of the Medical Committee of Congress, as appears by a letter written to him in June, by Dr. John Morgan, Director-General of the American hospitals. The writer advocates, at great length and in a circumstantial manner, a number of reforms and regulations, and in such a way as to disclose the leading influence of Mr. Adams in the committee. The journals show occasionally the outlines of the proceedings of this body, which was evidently much harassed for the means of supplying the various camps with medicines. Letters from all quarters were constantly arriving on this subject, and that of Dr. Morgan gave the most discouraging accounts of disease and death in the Northern army. "There is not," he says, "an article of medicine in Canada in the hands of any surgeon on that expedition."⁵ Supplies, however, soon arrived, and

¹ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, V. 767-790.

² Journals of Congress, April 15, 1776.

³ Force's American Archives, Fourth Series, V. 1684.

⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 774.

⁵ Dr. John Morgan to the Hon. Samuel Adams, Esq., member of the Medical Committee of Congress, June 25, 1776.

the committee is afterwards found dispensing what was required among the several armies. Dr. Samuel Adams, having served some months in Massachusetts, had lately been regularly appointed to one of the Northern regiments. His skill and alacrity in the discharge of his duties, added to an amiable disposition, were spoken of in the highest terms by those who remembered him; and these qualities won for him many friends during the war. He was stationed afterwards on the Hudson, where he had a long and sad experience, not only in his attendance upon the sick and wounded, but by his own hardships and privations, which hastened his death in the prime of life. The letter of Dr. Morgan to Mr. Adams, together with a memorial to Congress, setting forth the condition of the several hospitals, the lack of medicines, and the necessity of immediate action by Congress on the subject, was referred to a committee whose names are not given. Congress, at their recommendation, adopted a carefully prepared general order for the conduct of the hospitals, the pay of the surgeons, — whose number was increased, — the disbursements, and all matters pertaining to that department. But, as much dissatisfaction was expressed at Dr. Morgan's management of the hospital affairs, his conduct was examined by the Medical Committee, when, upon their report in the following winter, he was discharged from further service. He subsequently solicited an inquiry into his conduct, when he was honorably acquitted by a committee of Congress.

CHAPTER XLI.

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Richard Henry Lee introduces Resolutions declaring the Colonies **FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES**. — Momentous Debates. — Eloquence of John Adams. — Who were the other Speakers? — Samuel Adams as an Orator. — Contemporary Testimony of William Sullivan, Dr. Thacher, Elbridge Gerry, Governor Hutchinson, John Adams, Judge Sullivan, Thomas Jefferson, and Others. — Probability of his having taken the Floor in this Debate. — The Question postponed for Three Weeks. — A Member from each Colony appointed to draft **ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION**. — Samuel Adams represents Massachusetts on the Committee. — John Adams on the Committee to prepare a Declaration of Independence. — The Two should have changed Places.

THE letters of Samuel Adams to his friends in Massachusetts, stating that independence was gaining ground far and wide in the Colonies, were every day verified. He saw that early dawn was fast changing into the blaze of day. In Pennsylvania, the moderate members of the Assembly, led by Dickinson, whose influence had been all powerful, were gradually giving way before the popular voice. Virginia had, in May, instructed its delegates in Congress to propose declaring independence. Under the influence of Chase, "the Samuel Adams of Maryland," that Province was ready to concur with the other Colonies, and everywhere the strongest opposition was gradually sinking before the persistent efforts of the leading minds of the patriots. On the 5th of June, Richard Henry Lee offered his celebrated resolutions, declaring the Colonies free and independent states, dissolving all political connection between them and Great Britain, recommending the forming of foreign alliances and a plan of confederation.¹ On the 8th, Congress entered into

¹ It might be imagined that the two friends had concerted that these momentous resolutions should originate with the important and central Colony of Virginia. Lee and Samuel Adams thought and acted together, and were, in fact, almost inseparable in everything relating to public measures. The

the consideration of this resolve; and thereupon ensued the debate which, more than any other thus far, assisted to brush aside the lingering prejudices against a separation. The principal speakers on the side of the opposition were Robert Livingston, Wilson, Dickinson, and Edward Rutledge.¹ Of this most interesting discussion, not only the arguments, but, with a few exceptions, even the names of the speakers are not known. John Adams defended the proposed measure with the fervor of true eloquence.² But who were the others? Were Franklin, Samuel Adams, Sherman, Richard Henry Lee, McKean, Wythe, and Gerry dumb, when the greatest question ever submitted to men was pending? It must be that some, if not all of these, accustomed to public debate, and thoroughly imbued with the subject, encountered the adroit and earnest assailants of the resolutions. Not only these, but others must have been heard. There was wanting the burning and impetuous eloquence of one who was greater in oratory than them all; but Patrick Henry was lending his powerful aid to carry the Virginia resolutions for independence and confederation. With a genuine admiration of the spirit of New England, he wrote to John Adams from Williamsburg, where the Virginia Convention were about establishing a State government:—

“Our session will be very long, during which I cannot count upon one coadjutor of talents equal to the task. Would to God you and your Sam Adams were here! It shall be my incessant study so to form our portrait of government, that a kindred with

terms of the resolutions, too, are singularly in conformity with the words of Samuel Adams (see Chap. XXXIX.), where he urges Congress to “declare off” at once, and assume the position of an independent nation. “Declare independence immediately,” he continues. “Issue a manifesto containing a full view of our rights, our grievances, and the unwearied applications we have made for their redress. Apply to the state of whose readiness and power to assist us we have undoubted assurance,” France.—“Candidus,” Philadelphia, March, 1776.

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 390.

² Bancroft, VIII. 391.

New England may be discerned in it; and if all your excellences cannot be preserved, yet I hope to retain so much of the likeness, that posterity shall pronounce us descended from the same stock. I shall think perfection is obtained if we have your approbation. I am forced to conclude, but first let me beg to be presented to my ever esteemed S. Adams.”¹

The debate on Lee's resolutions was a grappling of the keenest intellects in America, each a character in himself and distinguished in the political arena. The contest, which continued from ten in the forenoon until seven in the evening, could not have been maintained exclusively by three or four persons in an assemblage of more than fifty, where each felt the vast issues at stake, — home, family, property, country, and life, — and both parties called up their utmost energies. Bancroft says, “the power of all New England, Virginia, and Georgia was put forth” in support of the resolution, and “the debate was the most copious and the most animated ever held on the subject.”² This is all that is now known. As far as the subject of these pages is particularly concerned, he certainly must now have thrown his weight into the scale of independence. How grand must have been his reflections, as he saw the direct question at last raised; with what anxiety did he observe the steady approaches towards the goal of his hopes. The desires of a lifetime were concentrated in that debate, which, only terminating with nightfall on Saturday, was resumed on Monday, the 10th, when again the entire day was consumed in the discussion. The child Independence was indeed struggling for birth, and, in spite of Pharaoh, all America would soon hail the distinguished stranger.

In addressing a public assemblage, Samuel Adams never essayed to inflame the passions of his hearers or work them into a flush of enthusiasm. A degree of deliberation, which marked his conversation on public affairs, and is a prevail-

¹ Patrick Henry to J. Adams, May 20, 1776 (*J. Adams's Works*, IV. 202).

² Bancroft, VIII. 391.

ing trait in his writings, characterized his speeches. To highly wrought periods and burning declamation he never aspired. He aimed at lucidity and condensation in thought and phraseology. He could, however, throw all his vigor of character into his subject, and, when the occasion required, scathing sarcasm, such as sometimes appears in his essays, was not wanting. Governor Hutchinson frequently alludes to the speeches of Samuel Adams between the year of the Stamp Act and that of the first Congress. We find him addressing a public meeting in Boston in 1769, and concluding his remarks with the startling exclamation, "Independent we are, and independent we will be!" —intending, as addressed to his hearers, to apply to Parliament, though Hutchinson asserts that, long before that early period, Adams had advocated in his private conversations a total independence of the Colonies.¹ His address to the trembling Governor in 1770, the evening after the Boston Massacre, "pressing the matter with great vehemence,"² as Hutchinson himself wrote, was an instance of the impressive language of Adams when a great crisis required the exercise of his power. John Adams, recalling that scene after a lapse of forty-seven years, says : —

"Thucydides, Livy, or Sallust would make a speech for him, or perhaps the Italian Botta, if he had known anything of this transaction, one of the most important of the Revolution, — but I am wholly incapable of it ; and, if I had vanity enough to think myself capable of it, should not dare to attempt it. In his common appearance, he was a plain, simple, decent citizen of middling stature, dress, and manners. He had an exquisite ear for music, and a charming voice when he pleased to exert it. Yet his ordinary speeches in town meetings, in the House of Representatives, and in Congress, exhibited nothing extraordinary ; but upon great occasions, when his deeper feelings were excited, he erected himself, or rather nature seemed to erect him, without the smallest symptom of affectation, into an upright dignity of figure and gesture, and gave a

¹ Hutchinson, III. 133, 264.

² *Ibid.*, 276.

harmony to his voice which made a strong impression on spectators and auditors,—the more lasting for the purity, correctness, and nervous elegance of his style.”¹

Every other contemporary witness, who has left anything on record of his style of public address, says as much. It was only on extraordinary occasions that his speeches were remarkable, and then he fixed the deepest attention of his audience. This “upright dignity of figure and gesture” is remembered by another contemporary, who personally knew Samuel Adams, and who alludes to his having been an “energetic speaker.” This writer thus describes him:—

“He was of common size, of muscular form, light blue eyes, light complexion, and erect in person. He wore a tie wig, cocked hat, and red cloak. His manner was very serious. At the close of his life, and probably from early times, he had a tremulous motion of the head, which probably added to the solemnity of his eloquence, as this was in some measure associated with his voice.”²

A characteristic of Samuel Adams’s speaking, already mentioned, was his fondness of occasionally illustrating his subject by some pertinent anecdote. One who had often heard him in public addresses has said that he did this in his more familiar harangues in Faneuil Hall before the Revolution, but in Congress his manner was more studied. There he clothed the wisest conceptions in sound, unpretending language, using that peculiar unravelling power which often goes further to convince the doubting and to explain away the clouds of sophistry than the most exalted flights of rhetoric or the most elegant diction. He generally spoke neatly and concisely, but never rapidly. His utterance was distinct and emphatic, his voice not loud, but clear and very pleasing in tone. Some of the other instances of his public speaking are given by the royal Governors Bernard and Hutchinson, in their secret letters to the Ministry,

¹ John Adams’s Works, X. 250.

² Sullivan’s Familiar Letters, p. 142.

where Adams is denounced for inflaming the people after the surrender of the Castle to the royal troops in 1770; haranguing the judges in the same year, when they had determined to put off the trial of Captain Preston, who commanded at the Massacre; in the Massachusetts Convention of 1768; and at the town meeting,¹ where the Tories attempted to annihilate the Committee of Correspondence. Bancroft points out the speeches of Samuel Adams at the Old South in the great mass meetings preceding the Tea Party.² The crown writers in Boston, too, in their attacks upon Adams, often refer to the dangerous influence of his public harangues. One speaks of his "mouthing it for patriotism, and talking the people out of their understandings." Another says of him, "The first of these chiefs is Adams, a sachem of vast elocution; but, being extremely poor, retails out syllables, sentences, and eulogiums to draw in the multitude; and it can be attested that what proceeds from the mouth of Adams is sufficient to fill the mouths of millions in America."³ Even the lampooning effusions of the "Hartford wits" may be taken as indications that Samuel Adams was no silent listener in public debates during the Revolution. In the "Echo" appears a poem, written in 1791, referring to the conduct of part of a recent Boston town meeting, when his weak voice was drowned in the uproar occasioned by his attempting to speak against the toleration of the drama in Boston:—

"Is his voice weak? — that dreadful voice we're told
Once made King George the Third, through fear, turn cold,
Europa's kingdoms to their centre shake,
When mighty Samuel bawled at Freedom's stake.*"

It is not improbable that the plain reasoning of Adams contributed to carrying contested points, though not with the eminent legal skill of John Adams, who, better versed

¹ June 27 and 28, 1774.

² Bancroft, VI. 478—485; VII. 68, 69.

³ Dr. Thomas Bolton's Oration, Boston, March 15, 1775.

"* Otherwise called a liberty pole."

in law, was by far the most efficient debater on the floor of Congress. Jefferson, writing nearly half a century afterwards, in relation to Samuel Adams, says : —

“ On the four particular articles of inquiry in your letter, respecting your grandfather, the venerable Samuel Adams, neither memory nor memorandums enable me to give any information. I can say that he was truly a great man, wise in council, fertile in resources, immovable in his purposes, and had, I think, a greater share than any other member in advising and directing our measures in the Northern war. As a speaker he could not be compared with his living colleague and namesake, whose deep conceptions, nervous style, and undaunted firmness made him truly our bulwark in debate. But Mr. Samuel Adams, although not of fluent elocution, was so rigorously logical, so clear in his views, abundant in good sense, and master always of his subject, that he commanded the most profound attention whenever he rose in an assembly by which the froth of declamation was heard with the most sovereign contempt.”¹

One who wrote in Boston much earlier in the century, immediately after the death of Samuel Adams, and when the decease of the patriot revived memories among his few surviving fellow-actors in the drama of the Revolution, thus speaks of his addresses in public bodies : —

“ In the Assemblies where the foundation of the American Revolution was formed, where principles and systems of government on which the felicity and security of mankind depend were drawn into discussion, his manly eloquence was never resisted with success ; his opponents were obliged to yield in silence, only hoping for a change by the means of an army more favorable to their views. His rhetoric was not a torrent of figurative language, but an impressive, sedate strain of reasoning, which could never fail to awaken the interested or convince the unprejudiced hearer.”²

At the death of Samuel Adams, in 1803, the Rev. Thomas

¹ Jefferson to Samuel Adams Wells, May 12, 1819.

² James Sullivan's Biographic Sketch of Samuel Adams (*Independent Chronicle*, Oct. 10, 1803).

Thacher, a frequent visitor at the house, and a sincere admirer of his character, published a Discourse, in the preparation of which he consulted such of the contemporary labors of the patriarch as were within his reach. Most of the audience had seen Adams, numbers of them had known him, and few were there who had not been taught to regard him as the "Father of the Revolution." Having sketched the services of the late Governor in the earlier years of the struggle, he turns to his Congressional career: —

"The great qualities of his mind were more fully displayed in proportion as the field for their exertion was extended. And the records of that period will announce that the energy of his language was not inferior to the depth of his mind. It was an eloquence admirably adapted to the age in which he flourished, and exactly calculated to attain the object of his pursuit. It may well be described in the language of the poet,

'Thoughts which breathe, and words which burn';

an eloquence not consisting of theatrical gesture or the pomp of words; not that kind which hath been described as 'more concerned for the cadence of a period than the fall of a commonwealth'; but that which was a true picture of a heart glowing with the sublime enthusiasm and ardor of patriotism; an eloquence to which, as before his fellow-citizens had listened with applause and rapture, so afterwards senates heard with reverence and conviction, — an eloquence little inferior to the best models in antiquity for simplicity, majesty, and persuasion."¹

These records made by men of the highest position in society, and at a time when thousands of the contemporaries of Samuel Adams were living, who had seen him in his prime, not only indicate the general impression relative to his abilities, but are positive proofs that he took part in debates on great questions. "I have often heard," says William Sullivan, in a manuscript letter, "some who were coagents with Mr. Adams in the preparatory measures of

¹ Thacher's Discourse, Dedham, Oct. 16, 1803.

the Revolution, speak of his boldness, decision, and moving eloquence with great admiration." Family tradition has brought down the impression that Samuel Adams advocated the Declaration on the floor of Congress. The man who could send forth in his letters and essays, early in this year, his solemn assertion that the only alternative was "independence or slavery"; that all treaty with Britain, "upon any other score than that of total separation," should be renounced; urging his countrymen "under God to trust their cause to their swords"; that the salvation of the country depended "upon a speedy proclamation of independence"; that he was "disgusted when terms of reconciliation" were entertained; longing for "one battle" in the South which might hurry on the Declaration and open negotiations for an alliance with France; and regarding with impatience and scorn the timid, procrastinating members of Congress, whom it was the part of prudence to conciliate and convince by slow and insensible approaches,¹ — this man was no quiet spectator of the debate upon an issue which all admit he had been first to raise and which for years had made a part of his very existence. Independence was the subject; and the spirit which we have already exhibited in his letters and public writings during this eventful year must now have found some vent in language.

Elbridge Gerry, in a conversation with the daughter of Samuel Adams (Mrs. Hannah Wells), a few years after the death of his venerable friend, said emphatically that his remembrance of his aid, during the discussions preceding the Declaration of Independence, was perfectly clear, and that the success of the measure was largely due to the "timely remarks" of Samuel Adams; that in one speech he occupied an unusually long time, and that two or three wavering members were finally convinced by the force of his reasoning both in and out of Congress. Being questioned subsequently, he was unable to recollect the substance of that

¹ Letters of Samuel Adams in the winter and spring of 1776.

particular address, but observed that it struck him as being the ablest effort he had ever heard from Adams. Time had erased from the memory of the old statesman all but the bare fact of the speech; but it is easy to infer that an effort which could thus remain engraved as a distinct occurrence on the mind of the narrator must have been powerful in its effects upon the listeners. Where now the most commonplace words of every speaker in public assemblies are given to the world by phonography and steam, how poignant is the regret that even the names of some who sustained American independence by intellectual combat on the floors of Congress should be shrouded in doubt, while "the large utterance" of others has passed hopelessly into oblivion.

The author of the *Life of Jefferson* says upon this subject, referring particularly to the concluding debate during the first two days of July: "If we presume what is hardly presumable, that John Adams took the floor half a dozen times during those days in a set speech, still there was room for many others on the same side. Who were they? We are not aware that even tradition pretends to answer this question; but conjecture can be at no loss at a part of them." He then quotes Jefferson's remarks, already given, as to the logical clearness and abundant good sense of Samuel Adams, whenever he rose in Congress, and adds: "It is impossible to doubt that the rigorous logic of the stern 'Palinurus to the Revolution,' — the man who was usually content to guide, and let others wear the ostensible trappings of command and receive the laurels of victory, — was heard in the momentous debate on the 1st and 2d of July, and in all probability in defence of the high and vigorous tone of the Declaration."¹ Whatever part Samuel Adams took in the discussion, his reasoning, like that of others of greater pretensions to oratory, was not so highly wrought as that which John Adams, the "main pillar in debate,"² employed in the final argument. The contemporary evidences of this are as

¹ Randall's *Life of Jefferson*, I. 182.

² Jefferson to Dr. Waterhouse.

clear as are those of the preponderating influence of the elder Adams in forwarding the great event to that point where eloquent phrases were only essential as finishing touches. The debates on the 10th of June proceeded from the motion of Edward Rutledge for a postponement of the question for three weeks. To insure unanimity, and to give the delegates from the central Colonies, who still hesitated, an opportunity to consult their constituents, this delay was agreed to;¹ and on the 11th, Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston were appointed to prepare the Declaration.

The resolutions offered on the 5th by Richard Henry Lee had provided for the preparation of "a plan of confederation to be transmitted to the respective Colonies for their consideration and approbation." The question of independence was not to come again before Congress until the first day of July, and, meantime, that of a confederation of the Colonies took precedence. How anxious Samuel Adams had been to bring about such a compact we have seen in his letters. During the last winter he laments the timidity which retarded his cherished hope of confederation, for the promotion of which, even in 1775, he had been solicitous to have the several Colonies adopt local forms of government which would prepare the way, he thought, for "one government with the consent of the whole, — a distinct state composed of all the Colonies, with a common legislature for great and general purposes." "This I was in hopes," he says, "would have been the work of the last winter"; and, in his disappointment, he reflected with some satisfaction that he did not find himself chargeable with neglect.² The time had arrived at last for the fruition of all his efforts; and a committee, consisting of one member from each Colony, having been agreed upon to digest the form of a confederation,³ Samuel Adams was made the representative of Massachu-

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 392.

² Letters of Samuel Adams in April, 1776.

³ Journals of Congress, June 12, 1776.

setts in the important work of binding the continent by a general agreement of union. The result, indeed, was to be only a more solid and compact structure framed upon his own original idea of intercolonial union for the common defence, so repeatedly elaborated in his essays since 1768, and urged with more directness in 1773, when he proposed the formation of an "American Commonwealth," an "independent state," with "an ambassador to reside at the British Court to act for the United Colonies";¹ but at that time he could not permit his speculations to go beyond mere suggestions, which he knew would in time culminate in his dearest aspirations. The two Adamses were now at the post of honor in Congress; the elder to aid in the first charter of general government, and the other on the committee for the preparation of a Declaration of Independence. Bancroft remarks upon this circumstance: "It could have been wished that the two could have changed places, though probably the result would at that time have been the same; no man had done so much to bring about independence as the elder Adams; but his skill in constructing governments, not his knowledge of the principles of freedom, was less remarkable than that of his younger kinsman."²

During the three weeks which intervened before the time set for the consideration of independence, the popular voice was growing more determined and unanimous for a separation. At least two thirds of the inhabitants of Massachusetts were demanding it; and other Colonies, animated by the example of Virginia, were instructing their delegates to the same effect. The lingering hope of reconciliation prevented others from arriving so speedily at a definite conclusion. In that interval, Samuel Adams was at times engaged in his duties with the Committee on Confederation, where, though Dickinson drafted the document, it is fair to presume that the

¹ "Z.," in the Boston Gazette, Oct. 11, 1773; and "Observation," in the Gazette, Sept. 27, 1773.

² Bancroft, VIII. 392.

entire committee carefully deliberated over its provisions before submitting it to Congress in the following month. That considerable portions were prepared by Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee has been related by one of the committee, though Lee was not a member. A curious estimate of the overruling power of Samuel Adams in Congress appeared this year in a London correspondence: —

“When the Congress had declared for independence, a new mode of government was consequently the first thing to be considered, and Adams had himself prepared almost a complete code of laws; but many were rejected, though with great caution, and an explanation of each particular impropriety, from a dread of too much offending that great man, who, to make use of an expression in a letter received some time since in America, was ‘so clever a fellow and so dangerous a v——n, that it was no man’s interest to quarrel with him.’”¹

Samuel Adams was always strongly attached to this form of government; and after the war he was desirous that its defects should be remedied, in preference to the adoption of a new plan. Opposed as Dickinson was to independence, it is hardly possible that such men as Samuel Adams, Hopkins, Sherman, and McKean could have coincided with him in his original draft, which was not submitted to Congress until the 12th of July. Another important service, upon which Adams was engaged during the month of June, related to the establishing of expresses between the Continental posts. Like the Committee on Confederation, this committee consisted of one member from each Colony, Samuel Adams representing Massachusetts. Whatever express system grew out of this body was probably due to Franklin, who was a member.

¹ Upcott, V. 43 (quoted in Moore’s *Diary of the Revolution*, I. 447).

CHAPTER XLII.

The Three Weeks Interval. — Efforts meantime to obtain Unanimity for Independence. — Adams as a Political Tactician and Caucus Manager. — Contemporary Testimony of Jefferson, Gordon, James Warren, Hutchinson, Gerry, John Adams, Galloway, Rivington, Clymer, Kent, Thacher, Church, Quincy, and Others. — Opinions in England of Samuel Adams. — Lee's Resolutions come up again for Discussion. — Debate on Independence renewed. — Adoption of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. — The Result due not so much to Oratory in Congress as to other Influences. — The "Colossus of the Revolution." — Adams regrets that Independence had not been declared in the Previous Year. — He points to the Exertions required to produce finally the Great Result. — His Influence in forming the Constitution of Pennsylvania. — Oration published in England in his Name. — He is not its Author.

A GENERAL assent had been given to the postponement of the question of independence, that the wishes of the constituents of various members might be consulted. It was a timely and prudent concession to the conservative element. The intervening three weeks were improved by the Independent party to win over reluctant members and break down the barriers to unanimity. No reference to the question appears in the journals of Congress, but a silent agency was at work, headed by Samuel Adams, which, more than his own convincing logic or the eloquence of more fluent speakers on that floor, prepared the way for the coming event. "Adams's conspiracy,"¹ as the Tories sometimes denominated the advancing Revolution, was on the eve of triumphant culmination. His extraordinary tact in arranging the details of political movements, and the art of bending others quietly to his will, has been shown in this work

¹ "Cæsar," in the *Middlesex Gazette*, Dec. 26, 1776. In Force's *American Archives*, Fourth Series, I. 1177, 1194, the patriots are spoken of by Loyalists as "Adams's crew," and the expression is also used by Lord North.

as extending from the earliest dawning of the Revolution. He was, in the fullest sense of the term, "a fisher of men." As a caucus manager and adviser and a controlling party tactician, he had no rival. He was essentially the power behind the throne greater than the throne, — "born and tempered a wedge of steel," as John Adams said of him, "to split the knot of *lignum-vitæ* which tied North America to Great Britain." No man, not excepting even Franklin, who in this respect somewhat resembled him, wielded in Congress an influence so potent; and as he, more than any other member, had brought the Revolution to its present point with the steady design of independence, so now, with redoubled effort, he concentrated his energies upon the crowning achievement. It was this talent of attracting every element of strength to himself, and shaping it to his own purposes, which made him so formidable to the Tories, who foresaw defeat whenever he entered the lists. It was this which prompted Governor Hutchinson to caution Hancock and Cushing "against his arts and insidiousness"; and to denounce him to the Ministry as the *instar omnium*, — the all in all of sedition, — "the Grand Incendiary," "who directed Boston and the Massachusetts Legislature just as he pleased,"¹ and to represent him, in an interview with George the Third, as the first who asserted the independence of the Colonies; which, through the letters and personal representations of friends and foes, had given him in England the reputation of being "the Cromwell of New England," "the Father of America," "*the Man of the Revolution*," and "the First Politician in the world."² John Adams, estimating his great abilities, had already pointed him out as a "masterly statesman," and deliberately pronounced him "the most elegant writer, the most sagacious politician and celebrated patriot perhaps of any

¹ See, *ante*, Hutchinson's letters between 1771 and 1773.

² See, *ante*, the letters of Josiah Quincy, Rivington, and Stephen Sayre.

who had figured in the last ten years.”¹ George Clymer had written of him : “ I cannot sufficiently respect him for his integrity and abilities. All good Americans should erect a statue to him in their hearts.” “ I always considered him,” said Jefferson, “ more than any other member, the *fountain* of our important measures.” This man, whose colossal shadow thus looms up by the light of contemporary evidence,— a noble type of patriotism, without one selfish thought to sully or one ignoble idea to taint its influence,— “ died and made no sign ” in any diary, at least, or autobiography. We see the grand results, while of the agency which was ever active in creating them only the mighty shadow of a name comes down to us. The midnight conversations and plans ; the daily scenes in committees ; the counter combinations, and the means of defeating them ; the innumerable incidents and anecdotes of particular characters — have been suffered to pass away unrecorded.

Adams seems to have lost sight of any credit due to himself in his generous devotion to the public welfare, and his honest desire to put forward any and all of his fellow-laborers who were worthy of political preferment. His name has become insensibly a synonyme of lion-hearted courage and wide-reaching power ; though, in some of the instances of this, those who make the comparison in later years speak rather from a general indefinite impression, so difficult has it been to exhume from the neglect of years other than the shattered pieces of the statue, long buried in the dust of the past. The writer has before him allusions to five celebrated patriots, mostly from distinguished and scholarly pens, in each of which the character described is called “ the Samuel Adams ” of some one of the Colonies. Omitting those written in the present century, and turning to the remark as used by sharers in the events of the Revolution, we find

¹ Indorsement (dated April 29, 1774), by John Adams, on the back of the will of Joseph Adams of Braintree, the ancestor of Samuel Adams.

Josiah Quincy, while visiting Cornelius Harnett, recording in his diary that his host was "the Samuel Adams of North Carolina"; and John Adams, describing prominent characters in Philadelphia, saying, "This Charles Thomson is the Sam Adams of Philadelphia, the life of the cause of liberty, they say." In fact, nearly every one of the Colonies outside of New England has found in history or biography its "Sam Adams." Among all the friends and co-laborers of Adams, no one was better qualified to speak of his public services than James Warren, whose spotless integrity and strong natural powers placed him high in the patriot ranks. During the war of the Revolution, Warren says that he was "the man who had the greatest hand in the greatest Revolution in the world." This was in the fourth year after the Declaration of Independence, and was said in a familiar letter to Samuel Adams, at a time when there seemed to be a disposition among a certain party in Boston to forget how much the country owed to its principal leader in times of public peril. Had Warren been consulted, or had he entertained an idea that the deeds of his great friend would be lost to posterity, he might have supplied a copious fund of data relative to the life of Samuel Adams.

"He combined," says William Tudor, who for many years knew him personally, "in a remarkable manner all the animosities and all the firmness that could qualify a man to be the assertor of the rights of the people. Had he lived in any country or any epoch where abuses of power were to be resisted, he would have been one of the reformers. He would have suffered excommunication rather than have bowed to Papal infallibility, or paid tribute to St. Peter; he would have gone to the stake rather than submit to the prelatric ordinances of Laud; he would have mounted the scaffold sooner than pay a shilling of illegal ship-money; he would have fled to a desert rather than endure the profligate tyranny of a Stuart; he was proscribed, and would sooner have been condemned as a traitor than assent to an illegal tax, if it had been only a sixpenny stamp or an insignificant duty on tea; and there appeared to be no species of corruption by which this inflexibility could have been destroyed.

"The motives by which he was actuated were not a sudden ebullition of temper, nor a transient impulse of resentment, but they were deliberate, methodical, and unyielding. There was no pause, no hesitation, no despondency; every day and every hour was employed in some contribution towards the main design; if not in action, in writing; if not with the pen, in conversation; if not in talking, in meditation. The means he advised were persuasion, petition, remonstrance, resolutions, and, when all failed, defiance and extermination sooner than submission."¹

As the three weeks in June pass by, and the memorable day approached, how must Adams have buckled to the task for which he gathered his resources, with the determination and singleness of purpose peculiar to himself. He, whose "superior application" had before "managed the factions in Congress and in New England," whom the watchful Gallo-way described as "eating, drinking, and sleeping little, and thinking much," must now, when all but the final act had been accomplished, have toiled like a giant in the completion of his grand design.

Samuel Adams followed an undeviating line in the pursuit of American independence. Through storm and sunshine, evil and good repute, he had kept this result steadily in view, and seems to have yielded all else in life to that controlling idea. The writings of a lifetime are devoted to the one aim of human liberty. All his letters, essays, pamphlets, and state papers, everything that emanated from his pen centred upon that individual object of his existence. Even the occasional writings on religious topics bear as well upon civil freedom; and all the reports of his conversations and speeches are upon political subjects. This treading one pathway for nearly half a century would lead us to suspect a distaste for the lighter fields of literature, did not the well-worn books which remained in his library, and his evident acquaintance with English authors, show that he could appreciate graces of style as well as grandeur of sentiment. He

¹ Tudor's Life of Otis, pp. 276, 277. 1823.

keenly enjoyed life, in which his wants were few and easily supplied, and his heart was full of cheerful sympathy for his fellow-men. Nor can this adherence to one object be construed into narrowness. In all else but his opposition to tyranny, no man was more liberal; and even his inherent hatred of popery and an ecclesiastical establishment was tinged with an enlightened and Christian tolerance for those or any other forms of worship. He professed himself no bigot, and respected the sentiment of adoration, under whatever form or by whatever sect it might be felt. The concentration of his faculties upon one idea was the main-spring of his extraordinary power. All history illustrates that in art, discovery, literature, and invention, in every branch of science, and the common pursuits of business, the diffusion of human capacity over a varied field of effort oftenest ends in defeat, when their direction upon a single great purpose leads to its accomplishment. We have already referred to the contemporary accounts of his style, when addressing public assemblages. His personal ascendancy among his fellow-members as a committee man, and in touching the secret springs which produced results to the eyes of the world, was a strength of quite another kind. In this respect, if we are to credit many contemporary witnesses, he had no equal in America. He has left nothing by which to show the working of this system; though one of his letters just after the signing of the Declaration modestly hints at "the time and patience it had taken to remove old prejudices, to instruct the unenlightened, and to fortify the timid." What has flashed from beneath the veil of secrecy leads to but one conclusion as to his ever active power. It appears from Jefferson's Recollections, that Adams introduced into this Congress the powerful preliminary engine of caucusing, the same with which he had for so many years led the way to most of his important achievements in Massachusetts. The Ex-President wrote in 1825: —

"If there was *any* Palinurus to the Revolution, Samuel Adams

was the man. Indeed, in the Eastern States, for a year or two after it began, he was truly the *Man of the Revolution*. He was constantly holding caucuses of distinguished men (among whom was R. H. Lee), *at which the generality of the measures pursued were previously determined on, and at which the parts were assigned to the different actors who afterwards appeared in them.* John Adams had very little part in these caucuses; but as one of the actors in the measures decided on in them, he was a Colossus.”¹

The management of these caucuses by Adams may be inferred from his mode of proceeding in the Boston committee a few years earlier, where he had been always the controlling mind, and from these in Philadelphia it is not difficult to trace many of the proceedings of Congress which remain unexplained in the journal. It is probably due to such preliminary meetings, that the opposition to independence was gradually diminished during this month. The most valuable assistant of Adams, in caucus and other preparatory work, was Elbridge Gerry, who made his appearance on the political stage of Massachusetts at a time when Adams was perfecting his great invention of Committees of Correspondence. From that time forward, the abilities and zeal of Gerry were efficient aids in the events which pushed the Colonies on towards independence; and he appears as an indefatigable worker, both in the Boston committees and the Provincial Congresses. Called now to supersede Cushing in the General Congress, he assumed to Adams his former relative position, and fell naturally into the scheme which his perfect harmony with the policy of the other enabled him to appreciate and promote. Gerry was one of the few who, in after years, remembered the “Father of the Revolution,” and cheered him with his correspondence. Samuel Adams and Gerry never failed each other, and their affectionate regard extended into the next century, Gerry visiting his ancient friend until within a few months of his death. Writing home, now, he said: —

¹ Randall's Life of Jefferson, I. 182.

“Since my first arrival in this city, the New England delegates have been in a continual war with the advocates of the proprietary interests in Congress and this Colony. These are they who are most in the way of the measures proposed; but I think the contest is pretty nearly at an end, and am persuaded that the people of this and the middle Colonies have a clearer view of their interests, and will use their endeavors to eradicate the ministerial influence of Governors, Proprietors, and Jacobites, and that they now more confide in the politics of the New England Colonies than they ever did in those of their hitherto unequalled governments.”¹

Jefferson felt towards Samuel Adams a disinterested friendship, and, from the day they first met, never ceased to venerate him. Adams was now in his fifty-fourth year, an age which carried dignity with itself, while the distinguished part he had acted since the commencement of the Revolution attached prestige to his name and great importance to his counsels. A life of temperance and frugality had preserved his powers of intellect and capacity for endurance, so that he may be considered as having been but little past the prime of his manhood in the year of the Declaration of Independence. He was nearly the oldest member, as Jefferson was one of the youngest in this Congress. “Although,” says Jefferson, “my high reverence for Samuel Adams was returned by habitual notices from him, which highly flattered me, yet the disparity of age prevented intimate and confidential communications.”² Such, however, need not have been the case, if we may judge by the fondness of Adams for the society of young men of promise, already illustrated by his intimacy in former years with Joseph Warren, Hancock, Quincy, and many other rising politicians of his native Province.

His enemies, the Tories, have left monuments to his memory relating to this memorable year, which, though founded in a far different spirit from those reared by Jeffer-

¹ Elbridge Gerry to James Warren, June 25, 1776.

² Jefferson to Dr. Waterhouse.

son, none the less show the wide path trodden by the man whom they especially hated and feared.

After the destruction of Rivington's press in New York, the Loyalist printer returned to England, and published a pamphlet to show that the intention of the present Congress was to assert American independence and maintain it with the sword.

"That I may thoroughly explain this matter," he continues, "it is necessary the public should be made acquainted with a very conspicuous character, no less a man than Mr. SAMUEL ADAMS, the would-be Cromwell of America. As to his colleague, JOHN HANCOCK, that gentleman is, in the language of Hudibras,

'A very good and useful tool
Which knaves do work with, called a fool.'

But he is too contemptible for animadversion. He may move our pity, not our indignation. Mr. Adams, on the other hand, is one of those demagogues who well know how to quarter themselves on a man of fortune, and, having no property of his own, has for some time found it mighty convenient to appropriate the fortune of Mr. Hancock to public uses, — I mean the very laudable purpose of carrying on a trade in politics.

"I need not inform my countrymen of the advantages of such a kind of commerce to individuals. The late worthy Mayor is a notable instance. Mr. Adams finding, therefore, how very profitable a business of this kind might be made without the necessity of a capital of his own, it is no wonder he should eagerly embrace the opportunity of dealing in political wares with the demagogues of Britain.

"In justice to that gentleman's talents and virtues, it must be confessed that he is an adept in the business, and is as equal to the task of forwarding a rebellion as most men. He is therefore far from being unworthy the notice of British patriots. His politics are of a nature admirably adapted to impose on a credulous multitude.

"Mr. Adams's character may be defined in a few words. He is a hypocrite in religion, a republican in politics, of sufficient cunning to form a consummate knave, possessed of as much learning as is necessary to disguise the truth with sophistry, and so complete a

moralist that it is one of his favorite axioms, 'The end will justify the means.' When to such accomplished talents and principles we add an empty pocket, an unbounded ambition, and a violent disaffection to Great Britain, we shall be able to form some idea of Mr. Samuel Adams. A man so gifted cannot be idle. Such a man is too useful an instrument in the hands of that arch fiend who is ever planning some mischief against weak mortals to escape his notice. His Satanic Majesty is too great a patron of rebellion himself to let slip the opportunity of whispering bloody mischief to so useful and devout a disciple."¹

When this pamphlet appeared in London, the news of the Declaration of Independence had not yet reached England. Rivington, who had been one of the ablest Tory writers for the press, reflected the unanimous opinion of that party in America in placing Samuel Adams at the head of the Revolution. A contemporary authority, already quoted, respecting his public speaking when aroused on great occasions, is equally explicit as to his weight in the counsels of Congress, and in this fully corroborates the testimony of Jefferson and of the Loyalist writer.

Thacher says, in his Funeral Discourse :—

"The power of language was, however, by no means his only qualification for the important post his country had assigned him. He had a penetration which no artifice nor sophistry could deceive; a decision which no difficulty or embarrassment could discourage; and a fortitude which no danger, however formidable, could appall. To these might be added a happy address to the heart and understanding of those who were his colleagues; so that he could combine men of opposite interest in supporting and establishing any favorite point; by which accomplishments he became one of the most effective and efficient members of the General Congress. And though in this, as well as in the former situations which he filled, he was joined by an illustrious band of patriots who deserve the eternal gratitude of their country, yet among many of the choice spirits he appeared (to borrow the language of the Roman poet) 'as the moon among the lesser lights of heaven.'"

¹ "Independency the Object of the Congress in America; or an Appeal to Facts." London, 1776.

No person who did not witness the life of Samuel Adams has ever been so eminently qualified to delineate his character as Mr. Bancroft, into whose hands fell all that remained of his papers, and who, from his own collections by conversations with those who were the contemporaries of Adams, and an intelligent study of all the memorials concerning him, has formed an unbiassed, comprehensive idea of the man. Continuing a sketch, some portion of which has before been quoted, he says :—

“No blandishments of flattery could lull his vigilance, no sophistry deceive his penetration. Difficulties could not discourage his decision, nor danger appall his fortitude. He had also an affable and persuasive address, which could reconcile conflicting interests, and promote harmony in action. He never, from jealousy, checked the advancement of others; and, in accomplishing great deeds, he took to himself no praise. Seeking fame as little as fortune, and office less than either, he aimed steadily at the good of his country and the best interests of mankind. Of despondency he knew nothing; trials only nerved him for severer struggles; his sublime and unfaltering hope had a cast of solemnity, and was as much a part of his nature as if his confidence sprang from an insight into Divine decrees, and was as firm as a sincere Calvinist’s assurance of his election. For himself and for others, he held that all sorrows and all losses were to be encountered, rather than that liberty should perish.”¹

It was remarked by Elbridge Gerry, soon after the death of Adams, that he labored day and night to produce independence during the sitting of this Congress. Without the more particular evidences already given, this brief remark would have but little importance, especially as coming from a colleague and one who himself shared in these labors. Mr. Austin, the biographer of Gerry, probably reflected the oft-spoken opinions of his father-in-law, when he wrote of Samuel Adams :—

“Another eminent citizen has been called the ‘Colossus of the Revolution’; but the distinction, if merited by any one man, could,

¹ Bancroft, VI. 196.

with singular propriety, be challenged by this inflexible republican. The most perfect disinterestedness marked his political conduct. Other men were desirous of the reputation acquired by bold or great acts, and of being distinguished for their zeal, their industry, or address. It was sufficient for him to do what was meritorious, regardless of the reputation derived from it. Whatever of fame was to be acquired, he left others, if they might, to obtain ; whatever labor or danger was to be incurred, he was ready to undertake himself. Devoted heart and soul to the great cause in which his country was engaged, he was willing indeed to encourage any one in the same pursuits, but disposed to honor those only who engaged in them from the same noble motives and the same integrity of heart. Many of the wisest measures of civil polity to which the times gave occasion, originating with him, added to the laurels of his associates ; and many of those imperishable memorials which may serve as models for the future statesmen of the country are the unclaimed productions of his pen, while the honors of authorship have graced his more ambitious coadjutors.

“Cool, dispassionate, and collected, the firmness of Mr. Adams’s mind was a check on the too adventurous rashness of the enterprising, and a support to the drooping courage of the doubtful, while it directed the execution of the proper measures with certainty, vigor, and success. Revolutions, it has been supposed, generate the character they require. Mr. Adams was made for the times in which he lived. The self-devotion, the assiduity, the disinterestedness of his conduct, ennobled the cause he supported ; and as these qualities rendered him less anxious to acquire reputation than to deserve it, posterity is bound to be the more just to his fame. He was not permitted to witness the grandeur and glory of his country, without feeling that patriotism and public services are not always remembered in the days of prosperity and success. But distance is placing his character in a light for unqualified admiration.”¹

The historian, Grahame, grasps the character of Adams in a short, vigorous sketch, the more noteworthy from its being the opinion of a foreigner. He says : —

“Samuel Adams was one of the most perfect models of disinter-

¹ Austin’s *Life of Gerry*, I. 357 — 359.

ested patriotism, and of republican genius and character, in all its severity and simplicity, that any age or country has ever produced. A sincere and devout Puritan in religion, grave in his manners, austere pure in his morals, simple, frugal, and unambitious in his tastes, habits, and desires; zealously and incorruptibly devoted to the defence of American liberty and the improvement of American character; endowed with a strong manly understanding, an unrelaxing earnestness and inflexible firmness of will and purpose, a capacity of patient and intense application, which no labor could exhaust, and a calm and determined courage which no danger could daunt and no disaster depress, — he rendered his virtues more efficacious by the instrumentality of great powers of reasoning and eloquence, and altogether supported a part, and exhibited a character, of which every description even the most frigid that has been preserved wears the air of a panegyric.”¹

We have already alluded to the opinion of Samuel Adams expressed in England. There, from the King down to the humblest politician who discussed American affairs, he was considered as the arch magician whose active spirit had pushed the Colonists to the point of independence. From among the many instances, one found in a London journal of those times will suffice as the English estimate of his character:—

“John Adams is the creature and kinsman of Samuel Adams, the Cromwell of New England, to whose intriguing arts the Declaration of Independence is in a great measure to be attributed, the history of which will not be uninteresting.

“When the Northern delegates broached their political tenets in Congress, they were interrogated by some of the Southern ones, whether they did or did not aim at independence, to which mark their violent principles seemed to tend. Samuel Adams, with as grave a face as hypocrisy ever wore, affirmed that they did not; but in the evening of the same day, in a circle of confidential friends (as he took them to be), confessed that the independence of the Colonies had been the great object of his life; that whenever he

¹ Grahame's Colonial History of the United States, II. 417.

had met with a youth of parts, he had endeavored to instil such notions into his mind, and had neglected no opportunity, either in public or in private, of preparing the way for that event which now, thank God, was at hand.

"He watched the favorable moment when, by pleading the necessity of a foreign alliance, and urging the impracticability of obtaining it without a declaration of independence, he finally succeeded in the accomplishment of his wishes."¹

Another Tory, writing from Boston early in this year, assails Adams and Hancock in this wise:—

"This man, whom but a day before hardly any man would have trusted with a shilling, and whose honesty they were jealous of, now became the confidant of the people. With his oily tongue he duped a man whose brains were shallow and pockets deep, and ushered him to the public as a patriot too. He filled his head with importance, and emptied his pockets, and as a reward kicked him up the ladder where he now presides over the 'Twelve United Provinces,' and where they both are at present plunging you, my countrymen, into the depths of distress."²

There is a great unanimity in the contemporary accounts of the unrivalled influence of Samuel Adams in accomplishing the measure of independence, whether they proceed from enemies or friends; and, when grouped and carefully considered, they present his name to posterity as the master architect of that memorable work. In the debate on the 1st and 2d of July, when the question came up for final decision, the way had been to a great extent prepared, in caucus and by other means, through the efforts of Adams and his colaborers; and though in these debates John Adams was the most conspicuous, all such arguments were of secondary importance, compared to the intense application which had already produced its effects. American independence was carried in that Congress, not

¹ "Decius," in the London Morning Post, 1779 (quoted in Moore's *Diary of the Revolution*, II. 144). A portion of this statement agrees with that of John Adams. See his *Works*, X. 364.

² "Z. Z.," Boston, Jan. 11, 1776.

so much by oratory as by the clear sagacity of intellect working upon intellect, and the studied approaches of deliberately conceived plans. The opposition had been reduced by this time sufficiently to render the adoption of the Declaration certain. The people were in reality in advance of their delegates in the desire for independence, and nothing could now have prevented its accomplishment. Under any circumstances, dissenting members would have been speedily replaced, as was actually the case in some instances. The undecided were powerless to stay the event; and had there been no eloquent speakers in Congress, the result must have been the same.¹ When the question was submitted on the 1st of July in committee of the whole, John Adams, in a speech of which the ability was long afterwards the theme of unqualified praise, urged the justice and necessity of a separation. Dickinson led in the opposition, and argued for delay until communication could be had with France, a confederation established, and the relative extent of the several States fixed upon. Bancroft says that others spoke,—

¹ The agency of Samuel Adams in bringing reluctant members to vote for the Declaration was well understood at the time, though the proceedings, for obvious reasons, were not made public. Galloway says, in his statement before Parliament: "Their debates lasted near a fortnight, and when the question was put, six Colonies divided against six. The delegates of Pennsylvania being also divided, the question remained undecided. However, one of the members of that Colony, who had warmly opposed it, being wrought upon by Mr. Adams's art, changed his opinion, and, upon the question the next day, it was carried in the affirmative by a single vote only."

This was as near as any person not a delegate and a violent Loyalist could be expected to come to the proceedings of Congress, which were preserved in such profound secrecy by the members, that it was not until more than forty years afterwards that Jefferson placed on record from his own notes the actual position of the several delegates. But even the flying rumors which got abroad in Philadelphia, though time has proved them to have been erroneous in some particulars, serve partially to lift the curtain, and afford a glimpse of the influences at work. Galloway undoubtedly based his account upon the current talk in political circles, and upon the general admission at that day that Samuel Adams, by his superior address and knowledge of men, or, as the Tories called it, his "art," was the great tactician of Congress and the chief promoter of independence.

“among them probably Paca, McKean, and Edward Rutledge.” It seems scarcely possible that the floor was not taken by one or more from several of the Colonies; and that Samuel Adams should have added his unvarnished logic in favor of the measure has already been shown as more than likely. No instructions having been received from New York, its delegates, though personally in favor of the Declaration, declined to vote. Pennsylvania and Delaware were divided, and South Carolina being opposed, only nine Colonies sustained the Declaration. At the request of Edward Rutledge, the determination was postponed another day, when Delaware was secured by the arrival of Rodney from Wilmington. Dickinson and Morris having absented themselves, the vote of Pennsylvania was obtained, and that of South Carolina, for the sake of unanimity, was thrown in favor of independence; New York, for want of instructions, was still unable to vote;¹ but there being now no dissenting Colony, the great charter of liberty was resolved upon; and America, through its representatives, pledged its life, fortune, and sacred honor for the support of the Declaration renouncing all allegiance to the British Crown.

“Thus,” says Gordon, “has an event been produced, which was not had in contemplation by any of the Colonies or even by any delegate, scarce by Mr. Samuel Adams, as what was so soon to happen, when Congress first met in 1774. When the Lexington engagement had taken place, he and some of his colleagues judged that the contest must then issue in independence or slavery, and therefore labored to establish the first that the last might be prevented. But, had a serious proposal of separating from the crown of Great Britain been early introduced into Congress, the dissolution of that body would have followed through the general aversion of the people at large and of particular Colonies to such separation.”²

The Declaration was approved and signed by all the members present, excepting Mr. Dickinson.³ If the habitual

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 349.

² Gordon's American Revolution, II. 295, 296.

³ Jefferson to Samuel Adams Wells, May 12, 1819.

caution of Mr. Adams permitted him to communicate to his friends in Massachusetts any particulars of the transactions of Congress, the letters have not been preserved. As he could not be depressed or disheartened by any reverses, so the greatest successes rarely elated him. He could look back through years of anxious toil, and, as he surveyed the vast result, his mind turned to the future and the terrible struggle impending. His own hopeful spirit foresaw success, for he had faith in the virtue of his countrymen; but he fully comprehended that the contest had only commenced. Some of his letters betray a feeling of impatience that the act had not been sooner consummated. To Hawley he writes, a few days after the signing: —

“The Congress has at last declared the Colonies free and independent States. Upon this I congratulate you, for I know your heart has long been set upon it. Much I am afraid has been lost by delaying to take this decisive step. We might have been justified in the sight of God and man in doing this months ago. If we had done it then, in my opinion, Canada would at this time have been one of the United Colonies, but ‘much is to be endured for the hardness of men’s hearts.’ We shall now see the way clear to form a confederation, contract alliances, and send ambassadors to foreign powers, and do other acts becoming the character we have assumed.”¹

Another letter alludes to the slow process of preparing the minds of some members for independence.

“It has been difficult for a number of persons sent from all parts of so extensive a territory, and representing Colonies (or, as I must now call them, *States*) which, in many respects, have had different interests and views, to unite in measures materially to affect them all. Hence our determinations have been necessarily slow. We have, however, gone on from step to step, till at length we are arrived at perfection, as you have heard, in a Declaration of Independence. Was there ever a revolution brought about, especially so important a one as this, without great internal tumults and vio-

¹ Samuel Adams to Joseph Hawley, July 9, 1776.

lent convulsions? The delegates of every Colony have given their voices in favor of the great question, and the people, I am told, recognize the Revolution as if it were a decree promulgated from Heaven! I have thought that if this decisive measure had been taken six months sooner, it would have given vigor to our Northern army and a different issue to our military exertions in Canada. But probably I was mistaken. The Colonies were not then ripe for so momentous a change. It was necessary that they should be united, and it required time and patience to remove old prejudices, to instruct the unenlightened, and to fortify the timid. Perhaps, if our friends had considered how much was to be previously done, they would not have been, as you tell me 'some of them were, impatient under our delay.'

"New governments are now erecting in the several American States under the authority of the people. Monarchy seems to be generally exploded; and it is not a little surprising to me that the aristocratic spirit, which appeared to have taken deep root in some of them, now gives place to democracy."¹

To Richard Henry Lee, who was then absent in Virginia, but shortly after returned and added his name to the Declaration, he writes:—

"I hardly know how to write, without saying something about our Canadian affairs; and this is a subject so thoroughly mortifying to me, that I could wish to forget all that has passed in that country. Let me, however, just mention to you that Schuyler and Gates are to command the troops, the former while they are without, the latter while they are within, the bounds of Canada. Admitting these gentlemen to have the accomplishments of a Marlborough or an Eugene, I cannot conceive that such a disposition of them will be attended with any good effects, unless harmony subsists between them. Alas! I fear this is not the case. Already disputes have arisen, which they have referred to Congress; and although they affect to treat each other with a politeness becoming their rank, in my mind, altercations between commanders who have pretensions so nearly equal (I mean in point of command) forbode a repetition of misfortune. I sincerely wish my apprehensions may prove to be groundless.

¹ Samuel Adams to Benjamin Kent, July 27, 1776.

“General Howe, as you have already heard, is arrived at New York. He has brought with him from eight to ten thousand troops. Lord Howe arrived last week, and the whole fleet is hourly expected. The enemy landed in Staten Island. Nothing has been done, saving that last Friday about three in the afternoon, a forty and twenty gun ship, with several tenders, taking the advantage of a fair and fresh gale and flowing tide, passed by our forts as far as King’s Bridge. General Mifflin, who commanded there, in a letter of the 5th instant, informed us that he had twenty-one cannon planted, and hoped in a week to be formidable. Reinforcements have arrived from New England, and our army are in high spirits. I am exceedingly pleased with the calm and determined spirit which our Commander-in-Chief has discovered in all his letters to Congress. May Heaven guide and prosper him. The militia of the Jerseys, Maryland, and Pennsylvania are all in motion. General Mercer commands the flying camp in the Jerseys. We have just now appointed a committee to bring in a plan for the reinforcement, to complete the numbers of twenty thousand men to be posted in that Colony.

“Our Declaration of Independence has given vigor to the spirits of the people. Had this decisive measure been taken nine months ago, it is my opinion that Canada would now have been in our hands. But what does it avail to find fault with what is passed? Let us do better for the future. We were more fortunate than we expected in having twelve of the thirteen Colonies in favor of the all-important question. The delegates from New Jersey were not empowered to give their voice on either side. Their Convention has since acceded to the Declaration, and published it even before they received it from Congress. So mighty a change in so short a time! New Jersey has finished her form of government, a copy of which I enclose. They have sent five new delegates, among whom are Dr. Witherspoon and Judge Stockton. All of them appear attached to the American cause. A convention is now meeting in this city to form a constitution for this Colony. They are empowered by their constituents to appoint a new Committee of Safety to act for the present, and to choose new delegates for Congress. I am told there will be a change of men, and if so, I hope for the better.

“A plan of confederation has been brought into Congress, which

I hope will be speedily digested and made ready to be laid before the several States for their approbation. A committee has now under consideration a plan of foreign alliance. It is high time for us to have ambassadors at foreign courts. I fear we have already suffered too much by a delay. You know on whom our thoughts were turned when you were with us.

"I am greatly obliged to you for favoring me with the form of government agreed upon by your countrymen. I have not yet had time to peruse it, but I dare say it will be a feast to our little circle. The device on your great seal pleases me much.

"Pray hasten your journey hither. Your country most pressingly solicits, or, will you allow me to say, *demand*s your assistance here."¹

It is difficult to overestimate the harassing nature of the daily routine of business performed by the principal committees during this eventful summer. "I write in great haste" is the conclusion of many of the letters of Samuel Adams, and those of his kinsmen indicate the exhausting nature of the work performed. Information of his failing health having reached Warren, that true friend and patriot wrote to Samuel Adams to revisit his native Province. He had then been nearly a year engaged in the most arduous toil, without asking or desiring a recall, so anxious was he to be at his post until the question of independence was decided.

"I am sorry to hear," says Warren, "your health is declining, though I can't wonder at it. Such long and intense application in a place so unhealthy must be too much for a firmer constitution than yours. I am sensible of the importance of your being in Congress at this time, and I know the reluctance you have at leaving your duty there; but your health must be attended to. We shall want you again. You must therefore take a ride, relax your mind, and breathe some of our Northern air."²

In reply to a letter of Adams, relating to the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Kent writes:—

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, July 15, 1776.

² James Warren to Samuel Adams, Aug. 4, 1776.

"It gives me great satisfaction to observe the progress you have made in politics, founded in wisdom, prudence, and virtue. I please myself in my confidence, that for this very end God has raised you up. . . . I hope you will come, for we never stood in greater need of a *main conductor*; and as you have accomplished the grand affair of the union, I believe you are reserved for the special benefit of that State to which you are most nearly connected. . . . Now you are acting for so many millions, born and unborn, strain every nerve God has given you, and at the least you will, in your own State, have the unspeakable blessing of the most noble self-approbation, and you shall govern ten cities in the next."¹

The letters of Mr. Adams in July refer to the convention which met in Philadelphia on the 15th of that month, for the formation of a State Constitution for Pennsylvania under the new order of affairs. The Declaration of Rights was reported on the 25th, and, having been recommitted, a new draft was prepared, which, on the 29th, after considerable debate, was ordered to be printed. Gordon, who was an eyewitness of the scenes in Philadelphia, says:—

"Great numbers in Pennsylvania are not satisfied with their Constitution, apprehending that it possesses too great a proportion of democracy, and that the State is not sufficiently guarded against the evils which may result from the prevalency of a democratic party, or the dangerous influence of demagogues. Mr. Samuel Adams has been thought or known to have concerned himself so unduly in the business, as to have provoked some to drop distant hints of an assassination."²

Mr. Adams left Philadelphia on the 12th of August for Massachusetts, and the Constitution had not then issued from the hands of the committee. The Declaration of Rights, however, had been a fortnight under constant discussion. That a design against the life of Samuel Adams was meditated would further appear from a letter written a few years later, which speaks of some such proposition hav-

¹ Benjamin Kent to S. Adams, Aug. 15, 1776.

² Gordon's *American Revolution*, II. 369.

ing been made apparently during the time in which the Declaration of Rights was pending. He certainly had worked in caucus and by other means to stem the opposition to the Declaration of Independence ; and it is not improbable that his influence was exerted to infuse his favorite democratic theories into the institutions of Pennsylvania. There are portions of both the instruments which could be attributed to him, but no evidence of his handiwork exists beyond the hint above given.

There appeared in London this year a printed oration,¹ purporting to have been delivered by Samuel Adams on the 1st of August at Philadelphia. Written in the style of Adams, with but one or two exceptions, it was evidently prepared by some person familiar with his writings. Even his frequent italicizing of words, intended to convey pointed meanings, is not neglected. It must have had an extended circulation, several copies being now preserved in various libraries. Its spuriousness was not suspected in England, where its effect had been the principal object of the author ; but whoever was the writer, it is difficult to see what was the immediate point to be gained by the deception. Samuel Adams was generally recognized in England as the principal man of the Revolution. From the statements of many who had returned from the Colonies, British politicians were more familiar with his principles and objects than with those of any other American, excepting Franklin, who had long resided in London, and the publication of such argu-

¹ "AN ORATION delivered at the State House in Philadelphia to a very numerous AUDIENCE on Thursday, the 1st of August, 1776, by SAMUEL ADAMS : member of the ***** the General Congress of the ***** of AMERICA.

'Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animunque ferro.' — HOR.

'O, save my country, Heaven ! shall be my last.' — POPE.

PHILADELPHIA, printed, LONDON, reprinted for E. Johnson, No. 4 Ludgate Hill. MDCCLXXVI."

A French translation of this oration was published at Paris, and a German translation in 1778, perhaps at Bern. The original will be given in full as an Appendix to Volume III.

ments as these would be likely to have great weight as coming from the leader in American politics. The only contemporary notice was apparently written in London, after a perusal of the oration; and the writer expresses the general opinion of the subtlety of Samuel Adams as beyond that of all others in Congress.¹

¹ The evidences against the authenticity of the pamphlet are numerous and palpable. 1. Congress was in session on the 1st of August, when the oration purports to have been delivered. It is hardly possible that on such an occasion, that body would not have adjourned; and the title-page bears the words, "delivered at the State House." 2. Contemporary records make no mention of any public celebration on the 1st of August; nor could the signing of the engrossed copy of the Declaration of Independence on the following day have had any association with the speech. None of the American reminiscences of those times refer to it, either in diaries, letters, or newspapers, and it is not likely that so interesting an occurrence would have escaped mention. 3. This professes to be a reprint of the original Philadelphia pamphlet. No such American edition has ever been seen, but at least four copies are known of the London issue. 4. Though the oration is dated nearly a month after the Declaration of Independence, it is silent as to that event, which the unceasing efforts of Adams had particularly pushed to consummation, showing that the author (evidently in London) was ignorant of the Declaration. 5. The title-page gives no name to the new-born nation, substituting stars for what clearly was unknown and only surmised. Before the 1st of August the Declaration was generally indorsed throughout the Colonies; and if there had before been any necessity, either for prudential or other reasons, of concealing the national appellation, it certainly now no longer remained; an American pamphlet printed in Philadelphia, a month after the Declaration, would unquestionably have had the full title. 6. The oration repeatedly alludes to the "present Constitution" as then in force, as being already "composed, established, and approved." No constitution existed at this date. The only approach to such an instrument were the Articles of Confederation; and Samuel Adams being one of the committee which had reported them in the previous month, none better than he knew that they had not been approved. Congress, on that very day, resolved upon the consideration of them, and the debate continued far into August, when they were laid aside, and not taken up until the next spring. But finally the work, though intended as an imitation of his peculiar style, contains certain indecent passages which it would be absurd to suppose for a moment that Samuel Adams could ever have written.

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CHAPTER XLIII.

Adams returns Home on a Visit to his Family. — Interview with Washington on the Way. — Arrives at Boston. — His Family at Dedham. — Temporarily resumes his Office of Secretary of State. — His Views as to the Commissioners sent to treat with America. — Returns to Congress. — The Campaign in New Jersey. — Disasters to the Patriot Arms. — Adams cheerful and undismayed in the general Gloom. — Philadelphia threatened. — Congress adjourns to Baltimore. — Adams opposes the Removal. — Is Chairman of the Committee on the State of the Northern Army. — Writes to Massachusetts, urging Enlistments to reinforce Schuyler. — Is on the Committee with Lee and Wilson to consider the State of Washington's Army. — They report Extraordinary Measures for reinforcing and sustaining the Army, and invest Washington with Dictatorial Powers. — Adams on the Committee to obtain Foreign Aid. — His Letters to Arthur Lee, James Warren, and John Adams on Foreign Alliances.

THE repeated solicitations of his friends induced Mr. Adams in this month to make a short visit homeward. A year's absence, during which the most distressing and exciting events had occurred in Massachusetts, made him the more anxious to ascertain the condition of his family. On Monday, the 12th, in company with the Judge-Advocate-General, William Tudor, he left Philadelphia, and occupied seventeen days on the journey. On Tuesday he wrote back to John Adams from Princeton : —

“ Before this reaches you, you will have heard of the arrival of near a hundred more of the enemy's ships. There are too many soldiers now in Philadelphia waiting for arms. Is it not of the utmost importance that they should march even without arms, especially as they may be furnished with the arms of those who may be sick at New York? Would it not be doing great service to the cause at this time if you would speak to some of the Committee of Safety of Pennsylvania relative to this matter? I write in haste. The bearer will inform you of the state of things.”¹

¹ Samuel to John Adams, August 13, 1776.

Reaching New York on the morning of the 14th, and after a visit to General Washington, he again wrote to John Adams.

"I found the General and his family in health and spirits ; indeed, every officer and soldier appears to be determined. I have not had opportunity to view the works here, but I am told they are strong, and will be well defended whenever an attack is made, which is expected daily. I see now, more than ever I did, the importance of Congress attending immediately to enlistments for the next campaign. It would be a pity to lose your old soldiers. I am of opinion that a more generous bounty should be given, — twenty dollars and one hundred acres of land for three years at least. But enough of this. The state of our Northern army mends apace ; the number of invalids decreases ; harmony prevails. They carry on all kinds of business within themselves ; — smiths, armorers, carpenters, turners, carriage-makers, rope-makers, &c., &c. they are well provided with. There were at Ticonderoga, August 12th, two thousand six hundred and sixty-eight rank and file fit for duty ; at Crown Point and Skenesborough, seven hundred and fifty ; in hospital, eleven hundred and ten. Dr. Whittemore has returned from his discoveries. He left St. Johns July 30th. There were two thousand or two thousand five hundred at that place and Chamblea ; stores coming on from Montreal ; counted thirty batteaux ; no vessels built or building. This account may, I think, be depended upon. In my opinion we are happy to have General Gates there. The man who has the superintendence of Indian affairs, — the nominal commander of the army, is the *real* contractor and Quarter-Master-General, &c., &c., and has too many employments to attend to the reform of such an army. Besides, the army can confide in the valor and *military skill* and accomplishments of *Gates*. *Sat verbum sapienti*. Pray write me, and let me know how the Confederation goes on. Major Meigs, a brave officer and a prisoner, taken at Quebec, is at this time, as I suppose, at Philadelphia. He wishes to be exchanged. Such an officer would be very useful here ; I wish you would give him your assistance. I propose to start to-morrow for the Eastward."¹

The Major Meigs here referred to had submitted his peti-

¹ Samuel to John Adams, August 16, 1776.

tion to Congress on the previous day, and on the 17th it was ordered that he be exchanged for Major French. Mr. Adams reached Boston on the 29th.¹ We can imagine his meeting with his patriotic friends, whom he had left a year before legislating at Watertown. The whole Province was in arms, centring at the camp in Cambridge, where Washington, anxious and wary, had endeavored to organize and equip his nondescript army of New England farmers. Now the enemy had been driven from the country, Boston was not again to be polluted with their detested occupancy, and the long-suffering people were once more in the enjoyment of comparative peace. He found his family residing at Dedham, where he remained but a few days. His journey North resulted in little or no relaxation, much as he needed it. As early as the 4th of September he resumed his duties as Secretary of State, and his signature is found attached to the commissions of the captains of privateers which appear to have been fitted out, not only at Boston, but along the coast from Harwich, Beverly, Salem, and other seaports.

About the time of his arrival at Boston, the battle at Brooklyn Heights occurred, and Lord Howe, who had received discretionary powers to treat for peace, counting upon the favorable issue of the late engagement and the capture of Generals Stirling and Sullivan, communicated to Congress his willingness to confer with whomsoever they might appoint. Franklin, John Adams, and Rutledge were chosen by ballot, on the 6th of September, and on the 8th John Adams wrote :—

“To-morrow morning Dr. Franklin, Mr. Rutledge, and your humble servant set off to see that rare curiosity, Lord Howe. Do not imagine from this that a panic has spread to Philadelphia. By no means. This is only refinement in policy. It has a deep, profound reach, no doubt. So deep that you cannot see the bottom of it, I dare say. I am sure I cannot. Do not, however, be concerned. When you see the whole, as you will ere long, you will not find it

¹ Force's American Archives, Fifth Series, I. 1226.

very bad. I will write you the particulars as soon as I shall be at liberty to do it.”¹

The conference produced no satisfactory result. The committee assured Lord Howe that the associated Colonies could not accede to any peace or alliance but as free and independent States, and America was convinced the more plainly that the subjugation was the fixed policy of Britain. John Adams, as he had promised, wrote to his friend a detailed account of this affair. But before the first letter reached Boston Samuel Adams received a rumor of the intended meeting, for the issue of which he became painfully anxious.

“I should have written to you from this place before,” he says, “but I have not had leisure. My time is divided between Boston and Watertown; and though we are not engaged in matters of such magnitude as now employ your mind, there are a thousand things which call the attention of every man who is concerned for his country.

“Our Assembly have appointed a committee to prepare a form of government; they have not yet reported. I believe they will agree in two legislative branches. Their great difficulty seems to be, to determine upon a free and adequate representation. They are at present an unwieldy body. I will inform you more of this when I shall have the materials.

“The defence of this town, you know, has lain much upon our minds. Fortifications are erected upon several of the islands, which I am told require at least eight thousand men. You shall have a particular account when I am at leisure. By my manner of writing, you may conclude that I am now in haste. I have received no letter from Philadelphia or New York since I was favored with yours, nor can I find that any other person has. It might be of advantage to the common cause for us to know what is doing at both those important places. We have a report that a committee is appointed (as the expression is) ‘to meet the Howes,’ and that you are one. This, without flattery, gave me pleasure. I am indeed at a loss to conceive how such a movement could be made consistently with the

¹ John to Samuel Adams, Sept. 8, 1776.

honor of Congress ; but I have such an opinion of the wisdom of that body, that I must not doubt the rectitude of the measure. I hope they will be vigilant and firm ; for I am told that Lord Howe is, though not a great man, an artful courtier. May God give us wisdom, fortitude, and perseverance, and every other virtue necessary for us to maintain that independence which we have asserted ! It would be ridiculous, indeed, if we were to return to a state of slavery in a few weeks, after we had thrown off the yoke and asserted our independence. The body of the people, I am persuaded, would resent it. But why do I write in this style ? I rely upon the Congress and the committee. I wish, however, to know a little about this matter, for I confess I cannot account for it in my own mind. I will write to you soon. In the mean time adieu.

“What has been the issue of the debates upon a weighty subject when I left you, and another matter (you know what I mean) of great importance ? It is high time they were finished. Pay my due regards to the President, Messrs. Paine, Gerry, Colonel Lee, and other friends.”¹

The conference had been decided upon after he left Philadelphia, and it may easily be conceived that he was exceedingly solicitous as to the result. His first intimation of such a plan had apparently been the rumor which reached him in Boston. In the mean time he received letters from John Adams, one of which has already been quoted. In reply, he says : —

“I am much obliged to you for your two letters of the 8th and 14th of this month, which I received together by the last post. The caution given in the first of these letters was well designed. Had it come to me as early as you had reason to expect it would, I should have been relieved of a full fortnight’s anxiety of mind. I was, indeed, greatly ‘concerned’ for the event of the proposed conference with Lord Howe. It is no compliment, when I tell you that I fully confided in the understanding and the integrity of the gentlemen appointed by Congress ; but being totally ignorant of the motives which induced such a measure, I was fearful lest we might

¹ Samuel to John Adams, Boston, Sept. 16, 1776.

be brought into a situation of great delicacy and embarrassment. I perceive that his Lordship would not converse with you as members of Congress, or a committee of that body, from whence I concluded that the conference did not take its rise on his part. As I am unacquainted with its origination and the powers of the committee, I must contemplate the whole affair as a refinement in policy beyond my reach, and content myself with remaining in the dark till I have the pleasure of seeing you, when I trust the mystery will be fully explained to me. Indeed, I am not so solicitous to know the motives from whence this conference sprang, or the manner in which it was brought up, as I am pleased with its conclusion. The sentiments and language of the committee, as they are related to me, were becoming the character they bore. They managed with great dexterity. They maintained the dignity of Congress; and, in my opinion, the independence of America stands now on a better footing than it did before. It affords me abundant satisfaction that the minister of the British King, commissioned to require, and fondly nourishing the hopes of receiving the submission of America, was explicitly and authoritatively assured that neither the committee, nor that Congress which sent them, had authority to treat in any other capacity than as *independent States*. We must therefore fight it out, and trust in God for success. I dare assure myself that the most effectual care has before this time been taken for the continuance and support of our armies, not only for the remainder of the present, but for a future year. The people will cheerfully support their independence to the utmost. Their spirits will rise upon the knowing the result of the late conference. It has, you may depend upon it, been a matter of great expectation. Would it not be attended with a good effect if an account of it was published by an authority of Congress? It would, I should think, at least put it out of the power of disaffected men (and there are some of this character even here) to amuse their honest neighbors with vain hopes of a reconciliation.

“I wish that Congress would give the earliest notice to this State of what may be further expected to be done here for the support of the army. The season is advancing, or, rather, passing fast.

“I intended when I sat down to have written you a long epistle, but I am interrupted. I have a thousand avocations which require

my attention. Many of them are too trifling to merit your notice. Adieu, my friend. I hope to see you soon.”¹

To Elbridge Gerry he had already written, touching upon some of the same points: —

“I wrote to our very valuable friend, Mr. J. A., by the last post, and then acknowledged the receipt of the only letter I have received from Philadelphia since I left that city. I presume your time must be employed in matters of much greater importance than writing to me, otherwise I am confident you would not have omitted doing me so great a kindness. Let me, however, just tell you that it might have been of some service to the common cause to have given me intelligence of the state of things in your great circle. I should have been glad to have known what situation the two capital affairs were in, which were on the carpet when I left you. You know what I refer to, and therefore I do not mention them, lest this letter should be intercepted, which is not impossible. Is it not of the utmost consequence that they should be completed with all possible despatch? I hope indeed that they are already finished. If I had had *one* of them (you understand which I mean), I might have had the opportunity, being here, to have explained it to the members of our General Assembly, and facilitated the measure in this State.

“From the various accounts which, for want of regular information I have spent much time and pains to collect, I flatter myself our army is upon more advantageous ground than when they were in the city of New York; in this I may be mistaken, for I am myself no judge of such matters, especially unassisted as I am by letters either from gentlemen of the army or any other upon whose opinion I could rely. Be it as it may, I will not suffer myself to doubt but the most effectual measures have been before this time taken for the support of the army both there and at the Northward the ensuing year.

“The General Assembly have ordered a part of the militia to march to the assistance of New York. I am told that the men turn out with great alacrity. The order passed the last week. Several regiments are already completed, particularly one in the county of Suffolk, and ready to march. Lincoln commands the whole, which

¹ Samuel to John Adams, Boston, Sept. 30, 1776.

I am informed will amount to five thousand ; but let it be remembered they are only temporary forces.

“The two frigates built in Newburyport still remain there, to the great mortification of every man. Had they been at sea, they would in all probability have more than cleared the expense of building them. To say no more, it is a misfortune. I wish the gentleman who had the care of those ships had been explicitly left more at discretion with regard to some contingencies which could not before be seen by our friend in Philadelphia. You know he is apt to be cautious even to a fault. But I suppose you have an account by an express sent off by the Assembly a few days ago, of the cause of the detention of the frigates in port. I hope when he returns, Mr. — will be furnished with every piece of paper which he may judge necessary to remove all doubts respecting the prudence or safety of his conduct.

“I have been, and am still, puzzled and perplexed with a *newspaper* report of a proposed treaty with Lord and General Howes. Is it so, indeed? From which party did the motion come? From the enemy, I presume. And in what style did they address the Congress? As the free and independent States of America, no doubt, otherwise I assure myself they would not listen to the first proposal. The people shudder at the idea of a treaty *at this juncture*. They are anxiously inquisitive to know for what purpose it can be intended. They readily acquiesce in the wisdom and fortitude of Congress, and pray God to increase it. I heartily join with them in this prayer, for I confess it is my opinion that more, much more, is to be apprehended from the arts of our enemies than their arms. Want of leisure prevents my writing more.”¹

In October, Mr. Adams, leaving the duties of Secretary of State to his deputy, John Avery, returned to Congress, and resumed his position in the Massachusetts delegation, and, on his arrival, John Adams in turn took his departure for Massachusetts. Before leaving home he had busied himself on the committee for the relief of the poor of Boston, which occupation, it seems, had been continued from the time of the Port Act, but was interrupted during the siege of Bos-

¹ Samuel Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Boston, Sept. 23, 1776.

ton. Immediately on reaching Philadelphia, he forwarded upwards of six hundred pounds collected in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, which was duly acknowledged by the committee.¹ Turning to the journals of Congress, we find him again engaging in the principal measures for the prosecution of the war, — among others, as chairman of a committee with Wythe, R. H. Lee, Wilson, and Ross, “to prepare an effectual plan for suppressing the internal enemies of America and preventing a communication of intelligence to our other enemies.” A report was brought in, and made the special order for November 8th, but the journal contains no further mention of it.² He was also chairman of a committee, with Clymer, Wythe, and Harrison, to take into consideration the condition of the Northern army.³ Their recommendations, submitted on the next and succeeding days, were adopted. The report provided for vigorous operations in the North, the casting of cannon at Salisbury foundry, and their transportation to Ticonderoga with all possible expedition; the provisioning of five thousand men for eight months, to be sent to Albany and thence to Fort Anne, and the like quantity for general service, to be stationed at Albany; the forwarding of medicines; the care of the sick; and the punishment of delinquent surgeons. This active policy was based upon the report of the committee who had been appointed to examine into the condition of the Northern army, and the measures now adopted harmonize perfectly with the suggestions already made by Samuel Ad-

¹ Force's American Archives, Fifth Series, II. 1316. On the 26th he wrote to the Rev. Dr. Samuel Mather: “On the evening of the 24th instant I arrived in good health in this city. I give you this information in compliance with my word, and flattering myself that I shall very soon be favored with a letter from you. I will promise to give you hereafter as much intelligence as the secrecy to which I am in honor bound will allow. . . . An interesting affair, about which a circle of friends whom I had the pleasure of meeting at Dr. Chauncy's [were speaking], is finished, I think, agreeably to their wishes.”

² Journals of Congress, Oct. 31, 1776.

³ *Id.*, Nov. 27, 1776.

ams in his correspondence. One of his letters written for this committee is extant. Their report had directed a proper examination of Mr. Livingston's founderies at Salisbury. The person selected was Lieutenant-Colonel Stuart, to whom Adams wrote : —

“ Congress having authorized and directed us, their committee, to appoint a suitable person to apply to Mr. Livingston, owner of a furnace in the State of New York, and to Governor Trumbull, who has the furnace in the State of Connecticut, also to the Council of the State of Massachusetts Bay, to procure such cannon and ordnance stores as General Schuyler has represented to be immediately necessary for the use of the army in the Northern Department, we have thought of no one in whom we can more cheerfully confide for the performance of this important business than yourself. And therefore we request you to undertake it, as Major-General Gates has assured us that it is not inconsistent with the general service, or the duty of that station which you hold under his immediate command.

“ You have a list of the ordnance and stores that are wanted, and you will be pleased to make your first application to Mr. Livingston for such of the cannon and stores as he can furnish. You will then apply to Governor Trumbull to be furnished by him with the remainder, to be sent to General Schuyler as early as possible this winter. If you cannot be supplied with the whole of the stores in New York or Connecticut, we advise you to apply to the Council of the Massachusetts Bay to make up the complement; to whom we have written, as well as to Governor Trumbull, requesting them to afford you all the advice and assistance you shall need in the prosecution of this business.

“ We doubt not but you will provide these necessities with all possible despatch and at reasonable rates; and see that they are in a way of being forwarded to General Schuyler, to whom you will give notice, and to us, of the success you may meet with in your several applications.

“ We would mention, for your information, that Congress has contracted for cannon to be cast in this State at the rate of thirty-six pounds ten shillings per ton; and the highest price that has been given in Pennsylvania is forty pounds. We expect, however,

you will purchase them on the best terms you can. The proof of the cannon must be according to the practice in Woolwich.”¹

Meantime disasters were overtaking the patriot arms in New York and New Jersey, and casting a gloomy cloud over the cause. Successive defeats had obliged Washington to retreat through the Jerseys by Raritan, Princeton, Brunswick, and Trenton, where he transported his remaining stores and baggage across the Delaware. Despondency seized upon thousands; while, in New Jersey, the proclamation of the Howes, offering pardon to all rebels who should lay down their arms, was eagerly accepted by great numbers, who saw no hope of success, and looked for protection at least from their invaders. But the most shocking abuses, such as might have been expected from a depraved and hireling soldiery, were perpetrated upon the unresisting inhabitants. Philadelphia was now only separated by the Delaware River from the advance of Cornwallis, who awaited the means of transportation to continue thither his victorious march. Aware of the importance of protecting the city, Washington despatched General Putnam to its defence; fortifications were commenced and preparations made to beat back the expected enemy. In the midst of every discouragement,—the army constantly dwindling, and with slight hope of considerable enlistments, the public credit exhausted, and the bills of Congress almost worthless, a succession of defeats to dampen the public confidence in their ability to cope with the British arms, and a growing disaffection to the cause under the late proclamation,—Congress at this appalling juncture exerted its utmost resources to keep alive the spirit of patriotism. On the 9th of December Dr. Witherspoon, Richard Henry Lee, and Samuel Adams were appointed a committee to prepare an

¹ Samuel Adams, Richard Henry Lee, William Whipple, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Hayward, Jr., to Lieutenant-Colonel Stuart, Baltimore, Dec. 31, 1776. Whipple and Hayward were added to the Committee on the Affairs of the Northern Army, Dec. 24; and R. H. Lee, on the 9th.

address to the people of America, which, on the following day, was adopted and published; a thorough organization of the army under the plan recommended by Washington was commenced; preparations were hastened for the defence of Philadelphia; troops were ordered forward to reinforce Washington, and a frigate was stationed on the Delaware to prevent its passage by the enemy; fast sailing vessels were sent to cruise off the Capes, to notify inward bound craft to seek safer ports; all the arms, ammunition, and clothing in Philadelphia were placed at the disposal of General Putnam, who was also authorized to employ all private armed vessels for the public defence. During these warlike movements, the greatest commotion prevailed in Philadelphia,—the Tories anticipating with pleasure the arrival of the British, and their opponents as zealously preparing for battle. An adjournment of Congress to Baltimore was thought of by many; but as yet the subject had not been introduced. How little these disasters served to depress the mind of Samuel Adams may be seen in his letters to his family and friends. While the retreating army was pressing towards the Delaware, he remained firm and undismayed. He considered these only temporary reverses, and saw light in the resources of his “dear New England” and the courage of his “countrymen” in Massachusetts.

“It affords me,” he writes, “singular pleasure to be informed that our General Assembly is now sitting in Boston. I have been of opinion that the public business could be done with more despatch there than elsewhere. ‘You have appointed a committee of war,’ with very extensive powers, ‘and appropriated to their disposition two hundred thousand pounds to purchase everything necessary to carry on the war with vigor the next year.’ I heartily rejoice to hear this. I hope the committee are men of business, and will make a good use of the powers and moneys they are intrusted with. Let me tell you, that every nerve must be strained to resist the British tyrant, who, in despair of availing himself of his own troops which lately he so much prided himself in, is now summoning the powers of earth and hell to subjugate America. The lamp of lib-

erty burns there and there only. He sees it, and is impatient even to madness to extinguish it. It is our duty, at all hazards, to prevent it.

“But I am sensible I need not write you in this style. You and the rest of my countrymen have done, and I have no doubt will continue to do, your duty in defence of a cause so interesting to mankind. It is with inexpressible pleasure that I reflect that the mercenary forces of the tyrant have for two years in vain attempted to penetrate the Eastern Colonies; there our enemies themselves, and those who hate us, acknowledge that the rights of man have been defended with bravery. And did not South Carolina nobly withstand the efforts of tyranny? She did. Virginia, too, and North Carolina, have in their turn acted with a spirit becoming the character of Americans. But what will be said of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys? Have they not disgraced themselves by standing idle spectators while the enemy overran a great part of their country? They have seen our army unfortunately separated by the river, retreating to Newark, to Elizabethtown, Woodbridge, Brunswick, and Princeton. The enemy’s army were, by the last account, within sixty miles of this city. If they were as near Boston, would not our countrymen cut them all to pieces or take them prisoners? But by the unaccountable stupor which seems to have pervaded these States, the enemy have gained a triumph which they did not themselves expect. A triumph, indeed! Without a victory! Without one laurel to boast of! For Bunker’s Hill they fought and bled. They sacrificed their bravest officers, and we wished them twenty such victories. But the people of the Jerseys have suffered them to run through their country without the risk of even a private soldier! They expended their ammunition at trees and bushes as they marched! But I hear the sound of the drum. The people of Pennsylvania say of themselves, that they are slow in determining, but vigorous in executing. I hope that we shall find both parts of this prediction to be just. They say, We are now determined, and promise to bring General Howe to a hearty repentance for venturing so near them. I have the pleasure to tell you that, within a few days past, they have made a spirited appearance. In spite of Quakers, Proprietarians, timid Whigs, Tories, *petit-maitres*, and trimmers, there is a sufficient number of them in arms resolved to defend their country. Many of them are now on the march. Heaven

grant they may be the honorable instruments to retrieve the reputation of their countrymen and reduce Britain to a contemptible figure at the end of this campaign.

"I am glad to hear our harbor looks so brilliant. *I hope it is fortified against every attempt of the enemy next spring.*

"In your letters, you ask me two important questions. I dare not repeat them. With regard to the last, you will understand me when I tell you, let not your mind be troubled about it."¹

Several letters to his wife at this time display his cheerful disposition in the midst of general discouragement.

"I am still in good health and spirits, although the enemy is within forty miles of this city. I do not regret the part I have taken in a cause so just. I must confess it chagrins me to find it so ill supported by the people of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys. They seem to me to be determined to give it up. But I must say that my dear New England will maintain it at the expense of everything dear to them in this life. They know how to prize their liberties. May Heaven bless them!"

"If this city should be *surrendered*, I should by no means despair of our cause. It is a righteous cause, and I am fully persuaded righteous Heaven will succeed it. Congress will adjourn to Baltimore, in Maryland, about one hundred and twenty miles from this place, when necessity requires it, and not before. It is agreed to appoint a day of prayer, and a committee will bring in a resolve for that purpose this day. I wish we were a more religious people."

"You tell me you were greatly alarmed to hear that General Howe's army was on the march to Philadelphia. I have long known you to be possessed of much fortitude of mind. But you are a woman, and one must expect you will now and then discover timidity natural to your sex. I thank you, my dear, most cordially for the warmth of affection which you express on this occasion, for your anxiety for my safety, and your prayers to God for my protection. The man who is conscientiously doing his duty will ever be protected by that righteous and all-powerful Being, and when he has finished his work will receive an ample reward. I am not more convinced of anything than that it is my duty to oppose, to the utmost of my abilities, the designs of those who would enslave

¹ S. Adams to J. Warren, Philadelphia, Dec. 4, 1776.

my country; and, with God's assistance, I am resolved to oppose them till their designs are defeated, and I am called to quit the stage of life."¹

Congress having accomplished all in their power for the defence of Philadelphia, Generals Mifflin and Putnam were summoned to a conference; and, upon their recommendation, it was resolved on the 12th to adjourn to meet at Baltimore. The preamble to this resolution particularized "the strong arguments by which the Generals urged the necessity of Congress retiring," and the liability to interruption; but Samuel Adams opposed the removal, which a remark in a letter of the previous day shows to have been unexpected by him, and perhaps suddenly introduced. He was unable to perceive the necessity of a removal at this time; and the event showed that the enemy, contrary to the general expectation, contented themselves with occupying New Jersey, and made no attempt to cross the Delaware. Writing from Baltimore on this subject, he says:—

"The truth is, the enemy were within seventeen miles of us, and it was apprehended that the people of Pennsylvania, influenced by fear, folly, or treachery, would have given up the capital to appease the anger of the two brothers, and atone for their crime in suffering it to remain so long the seat of rebellion. We are now informed that they have at length bestirred themselves, and that hundreds are daily flocking to General Washington's camp; so that it is hoped that, if our army pursued as expeditiously as they have retreated, they will take them all prisoners before they can reach the border of Hudson's River."²

Addressing Mrs. Adams, he wrote to the same effect:—

"The day before yesterday I arrived in this place, which is one hundred miles from Philadelphia. The Congress had resolved to adjourn here when it should become absolutely necessary, and not before. This sudden removal may perhaps be wondered at by

¹ Letters of Samuel Adams to his wife, Dec. 9 and 11, 1776, and January 29, 1777.

² S. Adams to J. Warren, Baltimore, Dec. 25, 1776.

some of my friends ; but it is not without the advice of Generals Putnam and Mifflin, who were at Philadelphia to take measures for its preservation from the enemy. For my own part, I had been used to alarms in my own country, and did not see the necessity of removing so soon ; but I suppose I misjudged, because it was otherwise ruled. It must be confessed that deliberative bodies should not sit in places of confusion. This was heightened by an unaccountable backwardness in the people of the Jerseys and Pennsylvania to defend their country and crush their enemies when, I am satisfied, it was in their power to do it.

“ If Heaven punishes communities for their vices, how sore must be the punishment of that community who think the rights of human nature not worth struggling for, and patiently submit to tyranny. I will rely upon it that New England will never incur the curse of Heaven for neglecting to defend her liberties. I pray God to increase their virtue, and make them happy in the full and quiet possession of those liberties they have so highly prized.”¹

Congress commenced its session at Baltimore on the 20th, when we find Samuel Adams appointed with Lee, Wilson, and Harrison to report upon a variety of military and financial correspondence, embracing letters from Generals Washington, Sullivan, and Wooster, and Robert Morris. Those from Washington referred, among other matters, to additional enlistments, a subject in which Adams had most heartily engaged, and for the furtherance of which he had advocated the payment of a bounty of twenty dollars to each soldier, and one hundred acres of land to those who enlisted for the war. This was a part of the plan adopted by the special committee of Congress, which had matured a system for the most part in accordance with the views of Washington. It was the increased pay of the officers and the bounties to the soldiers which, together with their great respect for the Commander-in-Chief, induced many of the old soldiers to remain long enough to enable Washington to strike the enemy on Christmas night at Trenton. The General

¹ Samuel Adams to his wife, Baltimore, Dec. 19, 1776.

had also requested that Knox, who was now at the head of the artillery, should be made a brigadier. Lee, Wilson, and Adams were therefore appointed a Committee on the State of the Army, and, upon their recommendation for the appointment of a brigadier-general of artillery, Colonel Henry Knox was elected by ballot.

The Committee on the State of the Northern Army, with Samuel Adams as its chairman, continued its sittings at Baltimore, and was the medium through which business of great moment was transacted. Letters from the Committee of Safety of Pennsylvania, and from military and financial officers, were referred to them. One from General Schuyler produced a resolution from this committee, probably prepared by Adams, directing the President to address the Assemblies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut on the critical state of Ticonderoga and other posts in that quarter, and the extreme danger of Carleton's possessing himself of that fortress, as soon as Lake Champlain should be so frozen over as to be capable of bearing horses; stating that the troops occupying those posts would not remain after the close of the year, and, in the most pressing terms, urging the hastening of troops from those States in given proportions. He wrote in relation to this to James Warren:—

“We have this day received a letter from General Schuyler, which has occasioned the passing a resolution forwarded to you, I suppose, by this opportunity. The General says he is informed that the levies are making very tardily. I hope that he has been misinformed. It is certainly of the greatest importance that New England, in a particular manner, should be very active in preparation to meet the enemy early in the spring. The British tyrant will not quit his darling plan of subduing that country. The intent of the enemy seems to be to attack it on all sides. Howe's troops have penetrated this way, far beyond his expectations. I flatter myself they will be driven back to New York, and winter there. Carleton will, unless prevented by an immediate exertion of New England, most certainly possess himself of Ticonderoga as soon as Lake Champlain shall be frozen hard enough to transport his army.

Carleton, it is said, has gone to Rhode Island with eight or ten thousand men to make winter quarters there. The infamous behavior of the people of the Jerseys and Pennsylvania will give fresh spirits to the British Court, and afford them further pretence to apply to every court in Europe where they can have any prospect of success. Russia has already been applied to. Their whole force will be poured into New England; for they take it for granted that, having once subdued those stubborn States, the rest will give up without a struggle. They will take occasion from what has happened in Jersey to inculcate this opinion. How necessary it is, then, for our countrymen to strain every nerve to defeat their design. The time is short. Let this be the only subject of our thoughts and conversations. Our affairs in France wear a promising aspect. Let us do our duty, and defend the fair inheritance which our fathers have left us,—our pious forefathers, who regarded posterity, and fought and bled that they might transmit to us the blessings of liberty.”¹

We have seen Samuel Adams, from the time of the appointment of Washington as Commander-in-Chief, heartily sustaining him in every measure, both as a member of committees indorsing his acts and in his endeavors to further the designs of the General, communicated by letter to Congress. He had a just appreciation of Washington’s wisdom and virtue, as his letters already quoted abundantly testify. He now gave proof of his confidence in that great man by consenting to confer upon him, for a limited time, dictatorial powers,—a measure which, on his part at least, evinced a readiness to sacrifice long-cherished sentiments to the immediate public exigencies. The Committee on the State of the Army, consisting of Richard Henry Lee, Wilson, and Samuel Adams, had evidently been appointed after the discussion of the recent disasters. Important letters had been that day considered in committee of the whole, which were finally submitted to these three members, who were to report on the following morning.² It was they who

¹ Adams to Warren, Baltimore, Dec. 25, 1776.

² Journals of Congress, Dec. 26, 1776.

recommended to Congress the resolution strengthening the hands of Washington, investing him with "full, ample, and complete powers" to raise and equip an army, establish their pay, apply to any of the States for such aid of the militia as he should judge necessary, form magazines of provisions in such places as he should think proper; to displace and appoint officers; to take whatever he might want for the use of the army, if the inhabitants would not sell it; and to arrest and confine persons refusing to take the Continental currency, or otherwise showing disaffection to the American cause. The "perfect reliance in the ability and uprightness" of Washington, as expressed in the preamble, was not misplaced. He used these extensive powers with a cautious circumspection as well as vigorous activity which must have relieved the doubts of the most anxious. Jealousy of delegated power, under however mild a form, at all times inseparable from a proper vigilance for the common liberties, was now a virtue doubly necessary when freedom was maintaining a death grapple with tyranny, and democracy was receiving its baptism in blood. A people entering upon a new political existence could not too warily guard against the dangerous effect of measures which had so often been fatal to popular government. Of all men in America, Samuel Adams should have been the most careful of risking the public liberties in the hands of the military, however virtuous might be the persons to whom the trust was confided. Eight years before, the quartering of the King's troops upon a loyal and inoffensive town had prompted him to warn his countrymen of this danger. Then he had written: "History, both ancient and modern, affords many instances of the overthrow of states and kingdoms by the power of soldiers who were raised and maintained at first under the plausible pretence of defending those very liberties which they afterwards destroyed. Even where there is a necessity for a military power within the land, which, by the way, rarely happens, a wise and prudent people will

always have a jealous eye over it; for the maxims and rules of the army are essentially different from the genius of a free people and the laws of a free government.”¹ The warning was as applicable now as then; but it was another maxim with him, that “the public safety should take precedence of all other considerations.” It only remained to inform the several States of the reasons which had induced Congress to thus enlarge the powers of Washington; and the same committee reported a circular to that effect, from the pen of Lee.

A first consequence of the Declaration of Independence was naturally the negotiation of alliances. While that event was still pending, Samuel Adams, in his impatience of delay, had looked beyond the intervening obstacles to the probabilities of receiving aid through the natural jealousy of England among the European powers. His letters repeatedly touched upon this subject; and as early as April of the last year, when the two Adamses were on their way to join the second Congress, it seems to have been a memorable topic of conversation, and preliminary arrangements were apparently made as to the embassies. A plan of treaties had been under discussion from a short time after the Declaration; and Franklin, Arthur Lee, and Silas Deane were before that time selected as Commissioners to France. In July, Samuel Adams had written: “It is high time for us to have ambassadors at foreign courts. I fear we have already suffered too much by a delay. You know on whom our thoughts were turned when you were with me.” This undoubtedly referred to Franklin, John Adams, and Arthur Lee. John Adams and Jefferson, who were nominated, having declined, the choice finally fell upon Franklin, Arthur Lee, who was still in London, and Silas Deane. The latter had already been sent as secret agent to France to sound its disposition and to negotiate for assistance. The form of a treaty had been prepared by Franklin and John

¹ Essays of “Vindex,” December, 1768.

Adams during the past summer. The late disastrous campaign seems now to have hastened the consideration of further alliances; and a few days after the assembling of Congress at Baltimore, Gerry, Witherspoon, Richard Henry Lee, Clarke, and Samuel Adams were appointed a committee "to prepare and report a plan for obtaining foreign assistance."¹ Their plan, which was reported on the 28th, was debated two days in committee of the whole, when it was resolved to despatch additional commissioners to the courts of Vienna, Spain, Prussia, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany. It was recommended to obtain the assistance of European powers; to prevent foreign troops from engaging against America; to urge the assistance of France in attacking any part of the dominions of Great Britain in Europe, and the East and West Indies; to confine American West India trade to the vessels of France and the United States; to exclude the British from any share in the cod fishery of America, by reducing the islands of Cape Breton and Newfoundland, and promising that, if ships of war were furnished to reduce Nova Scotia when required by the United States, the fishery should be enjoyed exclusively by France and the United States, and the territory, in the event of its capture, be equally divided between the two nations. Franklin, who had sailed for Europe, was also offered the embassy to Spain, and a draft of his commission was forwarded as reported by a committee of which Samuel Adams was a member; but as he declined the position, Arthur Lee was substituted. Ralph Izard was appointed to Italy, and William Lee to Vienna and Berlin.²

The nomination of Lee to the French and Spanish embassies was doubtless due to the influence of Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee. Adams, as we have seen, held the abilities of Arthur Lee in the highest estimation; and he now believed, as he had always done, that the services of his friend

¹ Secret Journals of Congress, Foreign Affairs, Dec. 24, 1776.

² *Ibid.*, Jan. 2, May 1, 1777. Sparks's Life of Franklin, pp. 416, 425.

in any public capacity must prove of signal benefit to America. Previously, he had solicited John Adams to accept the mission to France. Indeed, his fondness for his kinsman, with a long-established admiration of his remarkable talents, had shown itself from the very commencement of the Revolution, and he was always ready to further the interests and ambition of John Adams and all others who were worthy, and was content to remain out of sight himself. Shortly after the arrangement of plans for diplomatic relations, in which his judgment and industry was largely exerted, he wrote to his absent friend : —

“I have every day for a month past been anxiously expecting the pleasure of seeing you here, but now suspect you do not intend to give us your assistance in person. I shall therefore do all that lies in my power to engage your epistolary aid. You will by every opportunity receive my letters, and, I dare say, you will be so civil as to answer at least some of them.

“I have given our friend Warren, in one of my letters to him, the best reason I could for the sudden removal of Congress to this place. Possibly he may have communicated it to you. I confess, it was not agreeable to my mind, but I have since altered my opinion, because we have done more important business in three weeks than we had done, and, I believe, should have done, at Philadelphia in six months. As you are a member of Congress, you have a right to know all that has been done ; but I dare not commit it to paper at a time when the safe carriage of letters has become so precarious. One thing I am very solicitous to inform you, because I know it will give you great satisfaction. If you recollect our conversation at New Haven, I fancy you will understand me when I tell you that to *one place* we have added four, and increased the number of persons from *three* to *six*. I hate this dark, mysterious manner of writing, but necessity requires it.¹

¹ This riddle is explained by the late diplomatic appointments. The one place was France, for which the embassy had been several months arranged. The four additional were Vienna, Spain, Prussia, and Tuscany. The three persons were Franklin, Dr. Lee, and Deane, the Commissioners to France, whose number was officially increased to six by the appointment of Izard to Italy, William Lee to Vienna, and Franklin to Spain, — a position afterwards conferred upon Dr. Lee.

"You have heard of the captivity of General Lee. Congress have directed General Washington to offer six Hessian field-officers in exchange for him. It is suspected that the enemy choose to consider him as a deserter, bring him to trial in a court-martial, and take his life. Assurances are ordered to be given to General Howe that five of these officers, together with Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, will be detained, and all of them receive the same measure that shall be meted out to him. This resolution will most certainly be executed.

"We have this day passed a recommendation to the Council of Massachusetts Bay of a very important nature. It will be sent by this express to the Council, to whom I refer you for a perusal of it.

"Our affairs in France and Spain wear a promising aspect, and we have taken measures to put them on a respectable footing in other parts of Europe; and I flatter myself too much if we do not succeed."¹

The anticipations of the writer from these diplomatic commissions were not realized. Before Lee received his appointment, he had, at the request of Franklin and Deane, already left Paris for Madrid, but his mission failed. He was stopped at Burgos by an agent of the Spanish government, and finally turned away from Spain without reaching the capital. Izard never proceeded on his journey farther than Paris, and William Lee was equally unfortunate. With the commission to Arthur Lee, which seems to have gone forward at once after his appointment, Samuel Adams renewed his correspondence across the Atlantic.

"It has been altogether from a regard to your safety that I have restrained myself from continuing on my part that correspondence which you was obliging enough to indulge for several years. I know very well that your avowal of, and warm attachment to, the cause of justice and truth have rendered you exceedingly obnoxious to the malice of the British King and his ministers, and that a letter written by a zealous assertor of that cause, addressed to you, while you was in their power, would have brought upon you the resentment of that most cruel and vindictive court. I cannot omit

¹ Samuel to John Adams, Baltimore, Jan. 9, 1777.

this opportunity of writing to you after so long a silence, to assure you that I am most heartily engaged, according to my small ability, in supporting the rights of America and of mankind. In my last letter to you, near two years ago, I ventured to give you my opinion, that, if the British troops then in Boston should attempt to march out in a hostile manner, it would most surely effect a total and perpetual separation of the two countries. This they did in a very short time; and the great event has since taken place, sooner indeed than I expected it would, though not so soon, in my opinion, as in justice it might and in sound policy it ought. But there is a timidity in our nature which prevents our taking a decisive part in the critical time, and very few have fortitude enough to tell a tyrant they are determined to be free. Our delay has been dangerous to us, yet it has been attended with great advantage. It has afforded the world a proof that, oppressed and insulted as we were, we are very willing to give Britain an opportunity of seeing herself, and of correcting her own errors. We are now struggling in this sharp conflict, confiding that righteous Heaven will not look with an indifferent eye upon a cause so manifestly just and so interesting to mankind.

“You are now called to act in a more enlarged sphere. Go on, my friend, to exert yourself in the cause of liberty and virtue. You have already the applause of virtuous men, and may be assured of the smiles of Heaven.”

The day after these appointments, he wrote to James Warren : —

“I assure you, business has been done since we came to this place more to my satisfaction than any or everything done before, excepting the Declaration of Independence, which should have been made immediately after the 19th of April, 1775. Our ministers abroad are directed to assure foreign courts that, notwithstanding the artful and insidious representations of the emissaries of the British Court to the contrary, the Congress and people of America are determined to maintain their independence at all events. This was done before the late success in the Jerseys, of which you will have doubtless heard intelligence before this letter reaches you.”¹

¹ Samuel Adams to James Warren, Dec. 31, 1776.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Congress returns to Philadelphia. — Adams added to the Board of War. — He is Chairman of numerous Committees. — His Application as a Working Member. — Plan for the Suppression of Tories in Maryland. — Philadelphia again threatened by the Enemy. — Preparations for its Defence. — Adams recommends Martial Law. — Movements of the British. — The Articles of Confederation neglected since the previous Summer. — Adams urges their Consideration upon Congress. — Difficulties attending Adoption of this early Form of Government. — Sectional and other Jealousies. — The Articles accepted by Congress. — No other System could have been generally ratified by the People.

THE session still continued at Baltimore, until the recovery of the Jerseys by the unexpected crossing of the Delaware by Washington, with his half-naked and famishing army, infused new life into the waning cause, and added to his reputation in England. In January, Samuel Adams had been added to the Board of War.¹ Besides being on numerous minor committees, he was a member of the Medical Committee, whose duties embraced the entire hospital system of the several military departments; the Committee on the Northern War; that on Foreign Alliances; and the Committee for procuring Cannon. Of most of these he was chairman. His name appears in nearly every day's journal, but only the skeleton of the proceedings is given. The enumeration of his committee services, with the attendant papers, would form a record of exhausting labor, such as few men sustained even in that era of remarkable characters. The absence of many delegates entailed extra duties upon those who remained at this trying crisis, and the penalty of such unremitting exertions was a severe sickness, which attacked Mr. Adams while at Baltimore.² Referring to this period, when the military disasters demanded for

¹ Jan. 14, 1777.

² S. Adams to General Roberdeau, Feb. 9, 1778.

public affairs the most intense application from "the few," he afterwards wrote to General Roberdeau : —

"My brother Gerry can recollect with how much pleasure the few who were at Baltimore passed through the fatigues of business the last winter, when our affairs wore a more gloomy aspect than they have ever yet done. We did it with alacrity, because there was a spirit of union, which leads to wise and happy decisions."

Early in February John Adams returned to Congress, and, restored by a four months' sojourn in New England, resumed his place in the delegation; and the two Adamses continued thenceforth to tread one path until the close of the year, when John Adams retired forever from Congress, to represent his country with honor and credit abroad.

The position of Samuel Adams, after the Declaration of Independence, was that of a man whose chief aim in life had been consummated. The one object of his existence had been for years to bring his countrymen up to the point of separation from Britain; and, until the accomplishment of that event, he had regarded all things else as of lesser weight, — health, private interests, family, life, everything. Now that this position had been gained, while he never relaxed from his exertions to render effective the solemn manifesto, he considered the battle half won by the mere act of separation; and we find him no longer the advanced pioneer, leading his associates on towards the desired point, but a zealous adviser in the measures and an active co-operator with the recommendations of the military commanders. Whatever the deliberations of Congress could do to further the views of Washington, — whatever labor of legislation was necessary to supply the means to carry out the wise conceptions of the generals, — was done with the steady aid of Samuel Adams. The arduous labors of the Board of War, and the principal Congressional committees, were to be now of less importance in the public eye than the more brilliant exploits in the field; but the unpretending deeds of the patriotic diplomatist often far tran-

scend the direct operations of war, as they are generally the source from which military achievements have their origin. Accordingly, throughout the present year, the journals of Congress are the framework upon which might be woven a narrative of the counsels underlying many of the events of the war, where the mind of Adams would be apparent as an all-pervading agent in advising the preliminary movements and assisting in affording the means for their accomplishment.

In the Indian Department we find him zealously engaging in various measures for conciliating the more powerful tribes and securing their friendship. He was chairman of a committee to prepare instructions to Allen, an agent to the Nova Scotia Indians, and a part of the paper reads : —

“ You will explain to them as clearly as their understanding of the nature and principles of civil government will admit, the grounds of the dispute between Great Britain and America, the pains we have taken to settle those disputes on the rules of equity, and the necessity we were finally driven to, in defence of our liberties and lives, to resist our oppressors unto blood. Thus by convincing them of the justice of our cause, you may attach them to our interests, and lay a solid foundation for lasting peace and friendship with us.

“ You will also inform them of the union that subsists among these States, and the strength derived therefrom to each of them, that, viewing us in this light, they may see their own safety depending upon their peaceable disposition and behavior towards us.

“ You are to cultivate trade with them, by which means many great advantages which have heretofore thence accrued to the subjects of Great Britain will be gained by the people of these States.

“ And you are in a particular manner instructed to use your utmost diligence and influence to promote an intercourse and correspondence between those tribes and the Indians living in and about Canada, by the effecting of which the most useful and necessary intelligence may be frequently obtained ; and you are to give the earliest notice to Congress and to General Washington, and the commanding officer at Ticonderoga, of such intelligence as you may receive.”¹

¹ Journals of Congress, III. 17, 18.

An examination of the Congressional records shows the enormous amount of work which was imposed upon the Board of War from the commencement of this year, when Samuel Adams became a member. It would seem that the conduct of the war, at least in obtaining supplies and in the arrangement of all general business, devolved upon this body. Almost all important matters appear to have found their way to them, and they were continually bringing in reports on vital subjects, which were adopted by Congress, and so many reports, letters, statements, accounts, adjustments, appointments, and such an infinity of business was referred to them as to make it apparent that the Board of War was composed of men in whose judgment Congress had implicit confidence. A simple enumeration of the weighty subjects digested by them for several months would open a wide field for speculation, and afford an outline of the constant, though monotonous routine of duties of that body, as curious to the investigator as it might prove uninteresting to the reader.

As chairman of a committee for that purpose, Samuel Adams reported a plan for the suppression of the Tories in Somerset and Worcester Counties in Maryland, who had lately risen in arms against the Continental authorities. A protest against their proceedings having reached Congress, it was resolved to send sufficient force against them, with directions to seize and secure the leaders of the Tory faction, and to disarm all who refused to take the oath of allegiance. Two months later, the Maryland delegates represented the danger of an insurrection in these counties, and Congress appointed a committee, of which Adams was one, to meet the threatened danger. A plan was reported for the removal of desperate characters from the State, and for disarming all persons hostile to the American cause. The appointment of commissioners was recommended, with such powers as would enable them to detect and defeat plots and conspiracies against the liberties of America; and the gov-

ernment of Maryland was authorized to employ one of the Continental battalions for that purpose.¹

The causes which led to the removal to Baltimore, during the past winter, having ceased to exist, after the brilliant affairs of Trenton and Princeton, Congress returned to Philadelphia, where it met on the 4th of March.² Here, soon after the assembling, Adams appears on committees for general affairs. Intimation having been received that the enemy intended an attack upon Philadelphia, Samuel Adams, Duer, and Richard Henry Lee were deputed to confer with the State government of Pennsylvania on the form of authority to be exercised in the city, should the attack be made during the adjournment of the Pennsylvania Legislature. Mr. Adams reported a plan of provisional government for the public defence, amounting in effect to martial law, to which the people of Philadelphia were exhorted to submit, as "essential to the preservation of the lives, liberties, and properties of themselves, their families, and posterity." This government consisted of the President of the Council of Pennsylvania and as many members as could be convened, the National Board of War, and, in such cases as related to naval matters, the Navy Board of the State. They took these precautions in consequence of the attitude of Howe, who menaced Philadelphia, with the view of drawing Washington out of his intrenchments; but the movement upon Philadelphia did not take place, though a plan of operations with the main army against the city had been agreed upon by the Ministry. As the spring opened, the urgent necessity of reinforcing the army became apparent, and Duer, Adams, Wilson, Smith, Lee, and Sherman brought in a project for that purpose, which was adopted. Through the summer, the constant duties of the larger general committees of which Samuel Adams was a member evidently gave him no opportunity to serve on minor ones, as his name seldom appears in the

¹ Journals of Congress, III. 35, 114, 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

journals. The mysterious movements of the British fleet along the coast, and the strategic operations of the opposing armies under Washington and Howe, were the chief military events occupying the public mind. A letter from Adams, at this time, describes these manœuvres. He says :—

“I intended to have written you by the last post, but being under the necessity of despatching some letters to Boston by the Eastern post, which went off the same day, I was prevented. When you left this city, you may remember that the enemy were at Brunswick, and our army at a place called Middlebrook, about nine miles north of Brunswick, since which General Howe, who had joined his army, marched suddenly from thence, with the design, as it was generally believed, to make a rapid push for Philadelphia; but he disappointed the hopes of some and the fears of others, by halting at Somerset Court-House, about nine miles on the road leading to Caryl’s Ferry. General Sullivan, who, you know, had been at Princeton, made a quick march to cover our boats at the Ferry, and by retarding Howe’s march, to give an opportunity to our army to come up and attack them. But the enemy continuing at Somerset, Sullivan advanced with a considerable force, consisting of Continental troops and militia, and posted himself at a place called Sourland Hills, within six miles of Somerset Court-House. The enemy were very strongly posted; their right at Brunswick and their left at Somerset well fortified on the right, and having the Raritan in front and Millstone on the left. In this situation, General Washington did not think it prudent to attack them, as it did not appear to him to be warranted by a sufficient prospect of success; and he thought it might be attended with ruinous consequences. His design, then, was to reduce the security of his army to the greatest certainty, by collecting all the forces that could be drawn from other quarters, so as to be in a condition of embracing any fair opportunity that might offer to make an attack on advantageous terms; and, in the mean time, by light bodies of militia, seconded and encouraged a few Continental troops to harass and diminish their numbers by continued skirmishes; but the enemy made an unexpected retreat to Brunswick, and afterwards with great precipitation to Amboy.

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"On Wednesday last the enemy, reinforced, as it is said, with marines, marched from Amboy through a road leading from Brunswick to Elizabethtown to a place called Westfield, about ten miles, with a design, as it is supposed, to cut off our light troops and bring on a general battle, or to take possession of the highland back of Middlebrook, for which last purpose Westfield was the most convenient route; and it was also a well-chosen spot from whence to make a safe retreat, in case he should fail of gaining his point. On this march they fell in with General Maxwell, who thought it prudent to retreat to our main army, then at Quibbletown, from whence General Washington made a hasty march to his former station, and frustrated the supposed design of the enemy. I have given you a very general narrative of the different situations and movements of the two armies, without descending to particulars, because we have not as yet an authentic account, and we cannot depend upon the many stories that are told. I think I may assure you that our army is in high spirits, and is daily growing more respectable in point of numbers.

"Monsieur Du Coudray's affair is still unsettled. The French engineers have arrived; they are said to be very clever, but disdain to be commanded by Du Coudray. The Commissioner, D——e, continues to send us French, German, and Prussian officers, with authenticated conventions and strong recommendations. The military science, for your comfort, will make rapid progress in America; our sons and nephews will be provided for in the army, and a long and moderate war will be their happy portion. But who, my friend, would not wish for peace? May I live to see the public liberties restored and the safety of our dear country secured. I should then think I had enjoyed enough, and bid this world adieu."¹

The reference in this letter to Du Coudray relates to one of the many military men whom Silas Deane, without the firmness to refuse persistent applicants, had sent over from France with promises of appointments in the American army. Congress was utterly unable to provide for most of these, whose presence caused much discontent among native appli-

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, Philadelphia, June 26 and 29, 1777.

cants for commissions, although the foreigners were superior in experience and education. Among these strangers was Du Coudray, a native of Reims, and once chief of artillery in the French colonies. On his arrival with a number of French officers, Congress informed him of their inability to comply with his agreement with Deane. But in August of this year, Mr. Adams was one of a committee to define the powers to be granted to and exercised by Du Coudray, who was now made Inspector-General of ordnance, with the rank of Major-General.¹ But the appointment gave much dissatisfaction to Generals Greene, Sullivan, Knox, and others, and his commission was revoked. He then applied for the rank of captain, with the privilege for himself and companions of fighting in the American army. Congress therefore granted his request, gave official positions to the gentlemen who accompanied him, and advanced them fifteen hundred dollars.² How far jealousy of this distinguished officer might have proceeded history can never decide; for on the day after his appointment he was drowned while crossing the Schuylkill, to join Washington's army, which had just sustained defeat at Brandywine. John Adams, in his Diary, says: "He was reputed the most learned and promising officer in France."³ His fate, however, unlike that of Poniatowski, did not excite much sorrow among the wrangling aspirants for position, although the corpse, by orders of Congress, was buried with the honors of war.

Congress being embarrassed by numerous injudicious contracts of Deane, Samuel Adams was made chairman of a committee appointed in July, to examine his correspondence with the secret committee of Congress, and the Commissioner was recalled towards the close of the year.

The discussion and settlement of the Articles of Confederation formed an important era in the history of the struggle

¹ Journals of Congress, III. 218, 230, 233, 262.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 314, 340. In July Congress had advanced them \$2,666.33.

³ John Adams's Works, II. 438.

for a national existence, and a matter towards which Samuel Adams had continually directed his attention. Upon this subject, hallowed in the hearts of the millions who have inherited the blessings bequeathed to them by the Revolution, much has been written, with all the advantages of a full experience of the workings of the experiment then untried. Historians and biographers have analyzed it, and thrown upon it, and upon the motives and intelligence of the framers of the first bond of union, the light of reason and experience. Before entering upon the questions involved in those memorable discussions, we should consider for a moment the relative positions and sentiments of the Colonies, drawn for the first time towards each other by the necessities of a common defence and mutual protection, up to the time when, after an acquiescent delay of many months, a conviction of the absolute necessity of united action for the general government, and a nascent desire for a national existence, as we now understand it, again called attention to the plan for a confederation. In the interval, some of the principles upon which the system should be based had been settled in Congress. That body had thus far ventured only to recommend measures to the several States, but, being without central power other than that intrusted to the several delegations, there were no means of enforcing its suggestions. But in the very exercise of such powers as had been conferred upon its members, Congress found itself continually impeded and thwarted by the jealousies of the different States, who claimed for themselves all the sovereignty which, since the Declaration of Independence, no longer belonged to the British Crown.

In the settlement of the terms of a confederate Union of independent States, flushed with the excitement of a disruption of the ties of blood, traditional loyalty, and constant intercourse with Britain, all the natural jealousies of any government assuming to be of higher authority than the States which had just thrown off their allegiance to a power

they had been accustomed to call the first in the world, all the suspicions the weaker States might well entertain of being possibly swallowed up in the greater importance of their neighbors, all the distrust naturally felt by widely separated communities to confide the most important functions of government to a body politic composed of various elements and representing conflicting interests, were to be carefully considered and tenderly treated. That the confederation should be formed, and that the States should adopt it, was the object of prime importance. Whether or not any members aspired thus early to perfect a complete scheme of national government, and predicted the failure of the whole experiment, because a thorough system of popular representation in Congress was not established at the outset, is not important now to inquire, further than to give them credit for the most patriotic motives. Nor can it be considered, because the present Constitution was subsequently adopted, that the Articles of Confederation were consequently a failure. With the broadest concessions to the sovereignty of the States, it was more than three years before all had given their adherence to the system. Victory and prosperity had yet to teach those whose hands were still clenched in the deadly strife for liberty the proud words, "I am an American citizen." They could scarcely forget that they had sprung from distinct chartered Colonies, and now prided themselves upon being citizens of free and sovereign States. The sentiment of nationality was yet in the germ. In the conflict with one distant sovereignty, they hesitated to place the trusts of government in another, though composed of freemen like themselves, beyond their own newly established municipality, and, even when desiring to form a confederate government, they insisted upon being represented therein as States, each acting as a unit.

The debates on this subject were resumed in the spring and summer of the present year, and continued until the middle of November. Samuel Adams had seen with anxiety

the tardiness to pursue a matter so essential in preserving the political union of the States. The plan originally digested had been familiar to the preceding Congress, but in the interval a great change had taken place in the composition of that body. The two Adamses, Richard Henry Lee, Duer, Witherspoon, Laurens, Roberdeau, and Harnett were now members; but Franklin, Rodney, Harrison, Rutledge, Middleton, Sherman, Jefferson, Rush, Chase, Ward, and Hopkins were no longer there, and the general contrast in point of capacity and influence was very apparent. This contrast had been noticed, and was a matter of no little solicitude in the country soon after the Adamses left Congress in November of this year. It is pointedly referred to by the anonymous writer to Patrick Henry, hereafter quoted, and also by Hamilton, in his letter to Washington, written about the same time. Of the committee, consisting of one delegate from each Colony, who had prepared the Articles of Confederation in July of the previous year, Samuel Adams was now the sole remaining member in Congress; and upon him perhaps, more than any other, devolved the task of piloting the Articles through a series of amendments and other obstacles, of which the journals give ample evidence. Adams himself occasionally shows his impatience at the delays and apparently secondary importance attached to the subject by "the present Congress.

"We are going on within doors with tardiness enough," he writes to Richard Henry Lee, who was temporarily absent at Chantilly; "a thousand little matters often thrust out greater ones; a kind of fatality still prevents our proceeding a step in the important affairs of confederation. Yesterday and the day before was wholly spent in passing resolutions to gratify New York, or, as they say, to prevent a civil war between that State and the Green Mountain men, a matter which it is not worth your while to have explained to you."¹

And again, to the same person, he says: —

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, June 29, 1777.

"The confederation is most certainly an important object, and ought to be attended to and finished speedily. I moved the other day, and urged that it might be brought on, but your colleague, Colonel H——, opposed and prevented it. Virginia not being represented, it is put off till you shall arrive; you see, therefore, the necessity of your hastening to Congress."¹

A few days before this, at the motion of Samuel Adams, Congress had resolved:—

"That a letter be written to the executive powers of the States not represented in Congress, informing them that the confederation of the States and several other important matters are put off for want of a full representation of all the States, and earnestly recommending it to them to send a sufficient number of members to represent them as soon as possible."²

Delaware and New York had long been requested to send delegates to Congress immediately; and at one time this year the attendance had dwindled down so as to afford barely a working number. Considerable intervals evidently occurred in the debates on confederation; but when members enough were present, the subject came up twice or three times a week, until the Articles were adopted in November of this year.

When the discussion recommenced on the 7th of October, the first question was upon a motion that the smaller States of Rhode Island, Delaware, and Georgia should have one vote, and the larger States one vote for every fifty thousand white inhabitants, the representation to be increased with increased population. Against this the votes of all New England, with New York, New Jersey, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia, are recorded,—Pennsylvania and Virginia voting in the affirmative, and North Carolina throwing a divided vote. Again Virginia and a part of the North Carolina delegation were in favor of allowing each State one delegate

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, July 22, 1777.

² Journals of Congress, III. 233.

to Congress for every thirty thousand of its inhabitants, and that each delegate should have one vote. Upon the motion, that the quantum of representation be computed upon the basis of the contribution of taxes paid into the public treasury for the support of the Union, Virginia alone voted in the affirmative; and the question was finally carried against Virginia and the divided vote of North Carolina, in favor of an equal representation of the States.

Upon all these issues, which must have been warmly debated, as the several interests of widely separated communities came into opposition, Samuel Adams consistently and firmly sustained the positions asserted by the weaker States, and assented to by the overwhelming majority of the stronger. Equality of representation he rightly concluded might be readily yielded by the great landed communities to the smaller ones, until the war was over and America had assumed a position in the family of nations. Then these articles could be amended to suit the altered condition of affairs. Now the whole would be jeopardized by stickling for a point which would more than probably scatter the seeds of discontent. Upon the last three votes, the position taken by Virginia was sustained by only three members from the other States,—John Adams, Penn of North Carolina, and Middleton of South Carolina. However much we may applaud the views of those favoring a system of general popular representation, as coinciding with our own, the large majority opposed to them demonstrates that the times were not ripe for their project, and that to have insisted upon it in the face of such an opposition might have imperilled the adoption of the confederation, which, once accepted by the States, may be fairly considered as the legitimate parent of our Federal Constitution, conceived and accepted when smiling peace had revisited the land, and the tendrils of the vine had clustered around the blood-cemented fabric of the Union.

Nearly every delegate from the Eastern and Middle States

was opposed to the proposition that each State should contribute to the expenses of the war in proportion to the value of the land belonging to her citizens. New Jersey and all south of it voted in the affirmative, carrying the resolution, which was intended to exempt slave property from contributing its quota, by basing the taxation exclusively upon lands, buildings, and improvements. This presented the first direct antagonism of interests between the free and slave communities. The inequality thus prescribed in the burden of taxation was a much greater hardship to the minority, and far more likely to cause the failure of the whole experiment than the adoption of an equal mode of representation by States, against which Virginia alone of all the larger States cast her vote.

Samuel Adams also stood alone among his own delegation, and indeed against all New England, in the advocacy of a clause, probably introduced by himself, for fixing the powers of Congress, which had been restricted to limits only to be exceeded with the assent of nine States. The proposed amendment was, "provided that the nine States so assenting shall comprehend a majority of the United States, excluding negroes and Indians, for which purpose a true account of the number of free people in each State shall be triennially taken and transmitted to the Assembly of the United States." His vote is the solitary one in the affirmative from any Northern State; and, excepting the Virginia delegation and one member from Maryland, the whole Congress was against it. It is only by examining the journals, and tracing the subject of these memoirs carefully through the recorded votes, that a correct inference can be drawn of his opinions on particular points. The recording of votes on important subjects had been commenced this summer, and being thenceforth continued, indicates the tendency of the argument. A report of these debates would show more satisfactorily the early theories of government, and the prejudices, jealousies, and fears of members from extreme

sections. It is difficult to determine upon what grounds Virginia supported a measure so flatly opposed by the other Southern States then represented.

Another interesting discussion in this month was that relating to the vast and unknown tracts of land granted to several of the Colonies by the Crown, and extending in some instances entirely across the North American continent to the Pacific, or "South Sea," as it was termed in imitation of the wording of the royal charters. A motion was made for the States to lay before Congress a description of the territorial limits of each, thus establishing the precedent of a sort of self-defined boundary; and the rather hazardous question came up of giving to Congress "the exclusive power to ascertain and fix the western boundary of such States as claim to the Mississippi or South Sea," "and lay out the land beyond the boundary into new States." The spirit that had prompted a tenderness towards the smaller communities, in the matter of representation, was here again shown, on the other hand, in guarding against any attempt to interfere with the crown grants to the great landed States,—a matter which, like that of representation, was wisely left to the future, when its consideration would not be hampered by the excitement and hazards of war. The claims of the great States, under the Colonial charters, to undefined tracts of Western land was subsequently raised by the lesser ones upon the question of the adoption of the Articles, and it resulted in a competition of magnanimity, the smaller States consenting to come into the confederation, and trust to the generosity of their more powerful sisters, and the great States emulating each other in the cession of that vast territory, now comprising new members of the Union and the homes of millions of American citizens.

That Congress had no right to stipulate these lands away in advance, and as a condition for entering the Union, would seem to have been conceded by the votes of all the States

most naturally jealous of this reservation of half a continent by their more fortunate sisters, save Maryland, who, however, rather than encourage the common enemy with the hope that the Union might be dissolved, adopted the Confederation without any guaranty on the subject, — a generosity which was equalled, if not surpassed, in the same month by the cession by Virginia of the vast territory north of the Ohio.

During October and November in the present year the main points were all settled and agreed upon before Adams left Philadelphia, and the Articles were accepted a few days after his departure. They were sent to the States with an address urging their general adoption. In the following summer, when the objections of the several constituencies were to be met, Samuel Adams was a watchful participant in the discussions; and though the final adoption of the Articles was long delayed for reasons already alluded to, he did not relax in his exertions to harmonize the conflicting elements until he had the satisfaction of seeing the Confederation unanimously accepted. That these discussions resulted in the indorsement of his views may also be said of others with equal justice; and it is an evidence of his mature wisdom and conciliatory spirit, that he did not seek, in his earlier advocacy of that instrument, to incorporate principles recognized and embodied in our present Constitution, but at that time jealously regarded as an infringement upon the municipal governments of the different States, then considered in each State as the only palladium of liberty.

The progress of the war presently developed the fact that the Articles of Confederation were inadequate to the general requirements; that they offered no basis for the negotiating of loans and the proper support of the public credit, and were in reality but little more than the shadow of government. They therefore were abandoned peacefully and unregretted for the vigorous system adopted five years after the

close of the war. But if the framers of this primary bond of union required any apology, the student of history need look no further than to the condition of the American mind at the time of the confederation. The original committee to prepare the plan had been appointed simultaneously with that which drafted the Declaration of Independence. At the end of a month the report was submitted, and after a brief discussion, meeting with powerful opposition at the outset, it was suffered to lie unnoticed in Congress from month to month, despite the urgent appeals of its few advocates, until all but one of its originators had left that body. When it was at last taken up and adopted by Congress, they subjected it to a most rigid examination, and spared no pains to divest it of all possible objectionable features ; and yet, after all, there was a long and weary interval before the divergent interests and jealousies of the several States could be harmonized so as to secure a general acceptance. Where the stickling for State rights was so universal, and an instrument demanding so few concessions to the federal power was adopted with such reluctance, it is clear that any plan embodying a stronger central system would have entailed only a greater delay, if not, in the end, total rejection. Indeed, during the next summer, at the very time when the Articles were struggling for adoption in Congress against the objections sent in from different States, Massachusetts, by an overwhelming majority, had rejected her proposed State Constitution for reasons apparently much less urgent and plausible than could have been set up against the Federal compact. The Articles were in fact not, at the outset, the lamentable failure which posterity has been taught to consider them. They have been subjected to an unfair comparison with the present Constitution, the excellences of which are in no small degree due to an intelligent observation of the working of its predecessor. The form was prepared and amended with a knowledge of the times and the people. It was a frail bark on an untried sea, but, as the

event proved, the only system which the States would accept. It was judiciously framed and wisely criticised before it was submitted to the people, and as a bond of union and basis of government served its temporary purpose as well as any instrument could have done at that time.

CHAPTER XLV.

Surrender of Ticonderoga. — Popular Agitation. — Adams advocates a Change of Command in the Northern Department. — He heads an Application to Washington from the New England Delegates for the Substitution of Gates for Schuyler. — Washington chagrined at the Disaster. — Gates appointed to the Northern Command. — The British land at Chesapeake Bay. — Battle of Brandywine. — Congress adjourns to Yorktown. — General Howe occupies Philadelphia. — Gloomy Apprehensions of the Patriots. — Congress reduced to Twenty Members. — Courage and Cheerfulness of Adams. — His Advice to Desponding Friends. — Surrender of Burgoyne. — The Special Messenger to Congress. — Correspondence between Adams and Arthur Lee. — The News of Saratoga in Parliament. — France forms an Alliance with America.

WHILE the movements of Howe along the coast were keeping the Atlantic States in constant anxiety and alarm, tidings of a disheartening disaster came from the Northward. Ticonderoga, which was supposed to be adequately garrisoned under St. Clair, was invested by Burgoyne with a superior force, who succeeded in gaining a commanding position, and obliged the Americans to evacuate the post. The retreat was in part attended with disgrace, and the whole Northern army under Schuyler was completely disorganized. Rumors of these occurrences reached Philadelphia about the middle of July, and a storm of indignation was raised throughout the country against the Northern commanders. Even Washington, great as was his reliance upon both of those Generals, was surprised and perplexed at the disgraceful event. It was generally believed that the proper precautions for the defence of the place had been neglected, and hints of treachery were heard. The New England members of Congress, if not prejudiced against Schuyler, were generally of the opinion that Gates would be a much more competent commander. Samuel Adams had for some

time been favorably impressed with the soldierly abilities of Gates, and in the previous winter he had desired to place him at the head of the Northern army.¹ The present disaster, which effectually ruined the patriot cause in that direction,—and in a point to which Adams evidently attached the greatest importance,—confirmed him, as well as his colleagues, in their opinion. As a member of the Board of War he had formed his estimate of the strength of Ticonderoga from the letters of St. Clair, which represented the works to be in good condition for defence. Schuyler, the Commander-in-Chief in the North, in announcing the surrender, threw the blame upon his subordinate; while General Adam Stephen attributed it to the lack of the quota of troops from New England, which troops, however, after being ordered to that post, had been countermanded and sent elsewhere. In the confused accounts, and the sense of the magnitude of the disaster, Congress saw only that there had been negligence somewhere, and determined to effect a radical change in the command. Popular clamor, which was loud and pressing against the Generals, did not influence the mind of Mr. Adams in arriving at this conclusion, which, however unjustly the public verdict was for a while pronounced, was founded upon a recognized necessity, and he was perfectly convinced that Gates was a preferable man for the Northern army. An extract from one of Mr. Adams's letters shows his familiarity with the military situations, and that he carefully analyzed the letters from the Generals. His estimate of the disaster and its cause is now apparent enough.

“We have still further and still confused accounts from the Northward. ——'s letters are rueful, indeed, even to a great degree, and with an awkward mixture that excites one to laugh in the midst of calamity. He seems to contemplate his own happiness in not

¹ Samuel to John Adams, Baltimore, Jan. 9, 1777. “General Gates is here. How shall we make him the head of that [the Northern] army?” (John Adams's Works, IX. 448.)

having had much or indeed any hand in the unhappy disaster.¹ He throws blame on Sinclair in his letter of the 9th of July. 'What adds to my distress,' says he, 'is that a report prevails that I had given orders for the evacuation of Ticonderoga, whereas not the most distant hint of any such intention can be drawn from any of my letters to General Sinclair or any other person whatever.' He adds, 'What could induce the general officer to such a step, that has ruined our affairs, God only knows.'² And, indeed, Sinclair's own letter of the 30th of June, dated at Ticonderoga, would induce one to be of the same opinion, for he there says, 'My people are in *the best disposition possible*, and I have no doubt about giving a good account of the enemy, should they think proper to attack us.' Other parts of his letter are written in the same spirited style. The general officers blame New England for not furnishing their quota of troops. It is natural for the parties concerned to shift the fault from one to the other; and your friend, General Stephen, who seems desirous of clearing his countrymen of all blame, in a letter to your brother, says: 'Eight thousand were thought adequate to the purpose; they (New England) furnished about three thousand, and, for want of the quota, the place was lost; if the war is protracted by it, they stand answerable for the consequences.' The General forgets that five of the battalions ordered from Massachusetts to Ticonderoga were countermanded, and are now at Peekskill. I will give you an abstract of the forces at Ticonderoga and Mount Independence the 25th of June, taken from muster-master Colonel Varick's return:—

"Fit for duty of the nine Continental regiments, commissioned, non-commissioned, and staff officers included, two thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight; Colonel Wells's and Leonard's regiments of militia from Massachusetts, six hundred and thirty-seven (their time expired on the 6th of July); Colonel Lang's regiments of New Hampshire militia (engaged to the 1st of August), one hundred and

¹ General Schuyler, then in command of the Northern army.

² When a general court-martial had acquitted St. Clair of the charges preferred against him, the sentence came before Congress for confirmation. Mr. Adams voted in favor of an amendment discharging him from arrest, but against "acquitting him with the highest honor" (Journals of Congress, IV. 719). The amendment was defeated by nearly all the votes of the Middle and Southern States against New England.

ninety-nine; Major Stevens's corps of artillery, one hundred and fifty-one; five companies of artificers, one hundred and seventy-eight; Whitcomb's, Aldrich's, Lee's rangers, seventy; sick in camp and in barracks, three hundred and forty-two; men at outposts not included, two hundred and eighteen,—four thousand five hundred and thirty-three. Besides, a number of recruits belonging to the Continental regiments arrived at Ticonderoga between the 18th and 29th of June, that are not included in the above abstract.

"General Schuyler, in his letter of the 9th of July, says: 'I am informed from *undoubted authority* that the garrison was reinforced with twelve hundred men, at least two days before the evacuation.' When the Commander writes in so positive terms, one would presume upon his certain knowledge of facts; but as he was not present with his army, let us suppose (though it does not seem probable by the general gloomy cast of his letter) that he has overrated the numbers, and set down only nine hundred and sixty-seven, and will complete the number of five thousand five hundred; deduct the sick three hundred and forty-two, and I am willing to deduct the two 'licentious, disorderly regiments' from Massachusetts, though he acknowledges, 'they kept with him two days on the march,' and there remained near five thousand. Mentioning this in a public assembly yesterday, I was referred to the General's information to the Council of War, who says, 'The whole of the force consisted of two thousand eighty-nine effective rank and file.' But allowing this to be the case, is an army the worse for having more than one half of its combatants officers? Notwithstanding nothing is said of it in the public letters, General Sinclair writes his private friend that the enemy came up with the rear of our retreating army, and a hot engagement ensued. Other accounts say that many were killed on both sides; that our troops beat off the enemy, and that Colonel Francis of Massachusetts and some of his officers are among the slain. I shall not write you another letter, for I hope to see you soon."¹

The result of this feeling against the several Northern generals was their recall, but the execution of the order was for the while delayed by letters from Washington for a sus-

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, July 12, 1777.

pension of action ; and at his recommendation, Arnold, among others, was ordered to the Northern department, as was also Lincoln, a special favorite among the Massachusetts militia. The battle of Bennington, won by Stark, which at last gave a more cheerful aspect to affairs in the North, took place just as Gates, at the solicitation of Samuel Adams and several other of the New England leaders, arrived to supersede Schuyler ; and the spirits of the soldiers were magically revived by the victory of the sturdy Vermont general. Arnold, who had proved himself a wily strategist, especially in his contest with St. Leger, was invested by Gates with the command of the left wing ; and through August and September fortune seemed disposed to smile upon the patriot arms. The appointment of General Gates to the command in the North had been originally suggested to Washington at the instance of Mr. Adams, who, during the consideration of affairs in the Northern Department, had procured the passage of a resolution in Congress directing Washington to order such general officers as he should think proper to take command and relieve Schuyler. To back this resolve, on the following day the New England delegates, by the pen of Samuel Adams, wrote a letter to Washington for the appointment of Gates :—

“As Congress have authorized your Excellency to send a proper officer to take command in the Northern Department, we take the liberty to signify to your Excellency that, in our opinion, no man will be more likely to restore harmony, order, and discipline, and retrieve our affairs in that quarter, than Major-General Gates. He has, on experience, acquired the confidence, and stands high in the esteem, of the Eastern States and troops. With confidence in your wisdom we cheerfully submit it to your Excellency’s consideration, and have taken this method to communicate our sentiments, judging it would give you less trouble than a personal application. We are, with great esteem, your Excellency’s most obedient and most humble servants.”¹

¹ Members of Congress to Washington, Aug. 2, 1777 (Sparks’s Writings of Washington, V. 14).

Washington, who was at this time in Philadelphia, replied, desiring to be excused from naming a successor to Schuyler, for many reasons, which he was persuaded would occur to Congress upon reflection. The Northern Department in a great measure, he said, had been considered as separate, and more particularly under the direction of Congress, and the officers commanding there had been always of their nomination. He had never interfered further than merely to advise and to give such aids as were in his power on the requisitions of those officers. The situation of that department was delicate and critical, and the choice of an officer to the command might involve very interesting and important consequences.¹

Washington was undecided himself as to who ought now to be appointed to the Northern Department. That he doubted the policy of continuing Schuyler there is evident from a letter written soon after the receipt of the disastrous news. He says:—

“The evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence was an event so unexpected that I do not wonder it should produce in the minds of the people, at least the well attached, the effects you mention. I am entirely in sentiment with you, that the cause leading to this unhappy measure should be fully and minutely examined. Public justice, on the one hand, demands it, if it was not the result of prudence and necessity; and on the other, the reputation of the officers concerned, if they are not blameworthy. Had not Congress considered that as a separate department, appointed the officers in some instances to that command themselves, and been fully possessed of all the facts that I am respecting the events, I should not have doubted a single moment about directing an inquiry. These matters, I say, have laid me under some doubt as to the line I should pursue; but I am persuaded that an examination will be ordered in a few days, either by Congress or myself, when I hope the subject will be properly discussed, and that done which is right.”²

¹ Washington to the President of Congress, Aug. 3, 1777 (Sparks's Writings of Washington, V. 13).

² Washington to Governor Trumbull, July 31, 1777 (*Ibid.*, p. 9.)

The disinclination of Washington having thrown the matter upon the hands of Congress, Samuel Adams was probably particularly active in the appointment of Gates. He had long considered that a favorite design of the enemy was to strike at the head of the rebellion, New England. His letters ever since the evacuation of Boston contain warnings to that effect, and advice to his friends there to guard against it. The intention of Burgoyne, as Adams plainly discerned, was to follow up the capture of Ticonderoga by an advance upon Albany, and, co-operating thence with the British troops in New York, gain command of the Hudson, and thus cut off New England from the Southern and Middle States. It was clearly the duty of those who had created the officers of the army to displace any who, after proper trial, seemed to be unfit, and to supply the vacancy. Adams did not hesitate to act promptly, and the change in the Northern command was made as speedily as the rules of courtesy and the public exigencies seemed to require. He allowed no false delicacy or sympathy for an unfortunate general to interfere with the common safety. Time has removed from Schuyler all blame in the disasters, and the investigation of his conduct resulted in his honorable acquittal. The substitution of Gates gave to the country a general who was in no respect superior to Schuyler, than whom a braver or more trustworthy patriot did not live; but it certainly had the effect of restoring confidence in the army where insubordination and doubts existed, and showing that the soldiers, as well as Congress and the public, distrusted the late commander. An impartial view of the circumstances leads to the conclusion that, although Schuyler for a while suffered injustice by being superseded by a rival who, to increase his mortification, happened to arrive just as the unhappy affairs in the North were assuming a favorable turn, still Congress could now take but one view of the case, and, in making the change, consulted what was believed to be an imperative necessity.

Meantime the British under Howe had landed at Chesapeake Bay, and commenced a victorious march towards Philadelphia. Washington, in attempting to impede their progress, was defeated at the battle of Brandywine; and as the enemy neared the city, Congress, having reinvested Washington with extraordinary powers, resolved to move to Lancaster. Howe entered on the 26th of September; and on the 27th Congress assembled at the place designated, and after one day's business adjourned thence to Yorktown, where they met on the 30th. This was the darkest period in the history of the Revolution. One defeat after another had befallen the American arms, and many of the most hopeful of the patriots yielded awhile to feelings of despondency. The march of the enemy had been materially aided by the Loyalists, who were numerous and active in that section, and served the invading army as guides. Retreats and disasters made up the continual tenor of the despatches, only relieved by faint gleams of light from the Northward, where the turn in affairs presaged the possibility of a successful campaign. But great numbers in the Middle States, who had been well affected to the cause in the outset, disheartened now by the repeated reverses, saw no end to the conflict but in submission; and some members of Congress, unable to penetrate the gloom, anxiously regarded the future with forebodings of continued disasters.

"The prospect," wrote John Adams in his Diary, just before the removal, "is chilling on every side; gloomy, dark, melancholy, and dispiriting. When and where will the light spring up? Shall we have good news from Europe? Shall we hear of a blow struck by Gates? Is there a possibility that Washington should beat Howe? Is there a prospect that Mr. Dougall and Dickinson should destroy the detachment in the Jerseys? From whence is our deliverance to come? or is it not to come? Is Philadelphia to be lost? If lost, is the cause lost? No: the cause is not lost, but it may be hurt."

And again:—

"O Heaven! grant us one great soul! One leading mind would

extricate the best cause from that ruin which seems to await it for the want of it. We have as good a cause as ever was fought for ; we have great resources ; the people are well-tempered ; one active, masterly capacity would bring order out of this confusion, and save this country.”¹

These words probably reflected the thoughts of thousands, and it must have required almost superhuman fortitude to suppress the conviction of coming calamities. It was indeed an appalling juncture, and if such were the feelings of one of the most intrepid of the defenders of American liberty, before the battle of Brandywine had placed Philadelphia in possession of the enemy, how much more dreary and discouraging must have been the prospect when the fugitive Congress at Yorktown beheld the chief cities captured, and a shattered and dispirited army retreating before the conquering foe. No man in America had better reason to regard these reverses with anxiety than Samuel Adams. With him it was literally a matter of life and death. He might indeed be said to have lived with a halter about his neck. Denied the pardon which had been tendered to all save himself and Hancock, his very existence hung upon the event which now seemed darkly to overshadow the American cause. Success might hand his name down to posterity, blessed by the praises of succeeding generations. Failure pointed to the cell and the ignominy of a rebel's doom on the scaffold. But it was now that the soul of Adams shone out with cheering rays to encourage the desponding and fortify the wavering. Various causes had reduced the number of Congress to about twenty,—a small, but patriotic band, who steadfastly clung to the last hope, and appear, by the journals, to have zealously pursued their duties, animated with the consciousness of right and a trust in the decrees of an all-wise Providence. At one time Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Georgia were unrepresented in the General Council, New Hampshire and Rhode Island had

¹ John Adams's Diary (Works, II. 437, 439).

but one member each, and New York but two. "But," said Samuel Adams, while recurring to this subject some time afterwards, "though the smallest, it was the truest Congress we ever had."

Soon after they assembled at Yorktown, a private meeting of certain members was held, at which the desperate condition of affairs was considered. During this discussion the face of Samuel Adams, unlike that of his companions, was cheerful and undismayed. Each in turn expressed his feelings; and it was gravely questioned whether, after the repeated reverses and the triumphant advance of the invader, the cause could be further sustained with any reasonable hope of success. Adams was silent until all had spoken who wished to be heard. Then with a serene countenance, and a tone of dignified courage, he addressed them.

"Gentlemen," said he, "your spirits appear oppressed with the weight of the public calamities. Your sadness of countenance reveals your disquietude. A patriot may grieve at the distress of his country, but he will never despair of the commonwealth.

"Our affairs, it is said, are desperate! If this be our language, they are indeed. If we wear long faces, long faces will become fashionable. The eyes of the people are upon us. The tone of their feelings is regulated by ours. If we despond, public confidence is destroyed, the people will no longer yield their support to a hopeless contest, and American liberty is no more. But we are not driven to such narrow straits. Though fortune has been unpropitious, our condition is not desperate. Our burdens, though grievous, can be borne. Our losses, though great, can be retrieved. Through the darkness which shrouds our prospects the ark of safety is visible. Despondency becomes not the dignity of our cause, nor the character of those who are its supporters.

"Let us awaken then, and evince a different spirit, — a spirit that shall inspire the people with confidence in themselves and in us, — a spirit that will encourage them to persevere in this glorious struggle, until their rights and liberties shall be established on a rock. We have proclaimed to the world our determination 'to die freemen, rather than to live slaves.' We have appealed to Heaven for the

justice of our cause, and in Heaven have we placed our trust. Numerous have been the manifestations of God's providence in sustaining us. In the gloomy period of adversity, we have had 'our cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.' We have been reduced to distress, and the arm of Omnipotence has raised us up. Let us still rely in humble confidence on Him who is mighty to save. Good tidings will soon arrive. We shall never be abandoned by Heaven while we act worthy of its aid and protection."¹

It was but a few weeks after this that the news of Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga reanimated the country, and gave hope that it would terminate the contest. It had the effect of restoring confidence among those who had lately doubted, and in Europe it invested the American cause with the respect which the habit of defeat and a long succession of misfortunes had nearly destroyed. The intelligence reached Yorktown some time before Wilkinson, the special messenger who was sent by Gates with despatches to Congress. On the last day of October, Samuel Adams, Richard Henry Lee, and Roberdeau were appointed a committee to prepare a proclamation of thanksgiving for the signal success over the enemy. The report, which was from the pen of Lee, is one of the most elegantly written papers of the kind in the English language, and reflects the fervor of religious sentiment animating each member of the committee. Immediately after the appointment of this committee, Wilkinson, who had loitered on the way, applied for admission as the formal bearer of despatches with the auspicious intelligence. On being introduced to Congress, he was plied with questions relating to the event, and the situation of both armies since the surrender. A characteristic anecdote of Samuel Adams is related by McKean, in connection with Wilkinson's arrival. He says, writing to John Adams:—

¹ The words are given as related by one of the party to Perez Morton, who, in attesting to the correctness of the facts stated above, adds: "One other remark, which is omitted, was made by Mr. Adams on this occasion, and that was reminding the gentlemen of the common adage, that 'the darkest hour was just before the dawn of day.'"

“With respect to General Wilkinson, I recollect an anecdote. He was, in 1777, an aid to General Gates, and by him sent to Congress at Yorktown in Pennsylvania with the despatches giving an account of the surrender of Sir John Burgoyne and the British army to the Americans at Saratoga. On the way, he spent a day at Reading, about fifty miles from New York, with a young lady from Philadelphia, whom he afterwards married. When the despatches were read in Congress, propositions were made for paying a proper compliment to the favorite of General Gates, who brought us such pleasing news. Governor Samuel Adams, with a grave and solemn face, moved Congress that the young gentleman be presented with a pair of spurs.”¹

The correspondence between Adams and Arthur Lee, who was now at Paris, acting as Commissioner with Franklin and Deane, appears to have been continued through the summer and fall of this year, but only one of the letters of Adams can be found. Those of Lee reveal the state of Europe as seen through the medium of an intelligent observer whose aim was to obtain the assistance of France for his country. In September, he writes: —

“Certain, however, it is, that the appearances here are so equivocal, that no one can tell how long that peace, on the continuance of which our enemies build their hopes, will last. Let us, however, suppose, what is most probable, that the politics of Europe will continue to wear that dubious aspect which promises peace to-day and menaces war to-morrow, and then survey the present situation of this contest. The difficulties our enemies are under, in forming a

¹ Thomas McKean to John Adams, Philadelphia, Nov. 20, 1815 (*Works of John Adams*, X. 177). This anecdote has been erroneously connected with Dr. Witherspoon, to whom the remark is attributed by Duer in his *Life of Lord Stirling*, and quoted thence by Irving in his *Life of Washington*. The several records of votes in the journals show that Witherspoon was not present on the day when Wilkinson was introduced, (Oct. 31,) and he was absent for the rest of the year. In 1807, during the trial of Aaron Burr, the name of General Wilkinson was often in the public papers, at which time, the anecdote being revived, it was associated by some writers with Dr. Witherspoon, and is probably reproduced from that source. It is found in the *New England Palladium* for June 30, 1807.

probable plan for the ensuing year, both in men and money, are, to all human appearances, insuperable. There is not, therefore, any reason to apprehend that their armies will ever again be so numerous or so well appointed as those which now assail us. . . . The measures of this court which look like war are a treaty lately made with the Swiss Cantons, by which they are to be supplied with five thousand more Swiss troops if wanted, and the sending eight thousand men, with twelve thousand artillery, to their West India Islands. Every power in Europe has also forbade their sailors entering into any foreign service whatever, so much do they expect a general war. Great part of the English commerce is already carried on in French and Dutch bottoms, which circumstance alone will prevent them from continuing the war, because it is a mortal blow to their marine. From these circumstances, we may conclude that the present effort is the last that can carry with it any hope of conquest, and that the war can hardly continue in any shape two years longer. . . . I have within this year been at the several courts of Spain, Vienna, and Berlin, and I find this of France is the great wheel that moves them all. Here, therefore, the most activity is requisite; and if it should ever be a question in Congress about my destination, I shall be much obliged to you for remembering that I should prefer being at the Court of France.

“Upon the whole, then, my dear friend, I trust we may congratulate ourselves upon the liberties of our country having triumphed over the greatest malice of our enemies, whom perhaps we ought to thank for having taught us to know ourselves, and to assume that rank among the independent nations of the earth to which we are entitled. . . . The two last despatches for us were thrown into the sea, so that we are left in the most anxious uncertainty concerning your situation. Our enemies are either in the same state, or theirs is not such as they wish to be known; since they suffer not only their own people, but all Europe, to insult them with inquiries, what has become of Howe and Burgoyne, without condescending to answer a word. At present, therefore, both their performances in this and their preparations for the next campaign, if they have any, are a profound secret. Yet the meeting of Parliament, which is to be the 20th, approaches fast, when something must be said on these momentous points.”

The news of Saratoga, and indeed of the entire campaign, had not then reached France. Lee had as yet little expectation of a war between France and England, by which to enlist the former in the American cause. He was confident that success would attend the patriots without the assistance of allies, and liberties thus established he thought would be more durable than if acquired by foreign interposition.

"The actual state of Europe," he says, "amid events of such magnitude and a situation so critical, is tranquil to a degree that is inexplicable. Whether it be a stillness before the storm or a settled tranquillity is hard to determine. I am inclined to think it the latter. For, in truth, it seems that America is an object too vast for their embrace. That balance of power, which has so long been the hobby-horse of Europe, and in which the power of Great Britain, founded upon America, had so great a weight, must be changed and a new scale adopted. This makes all the Cabinet so averse to enter into a consideration that must send them again to school, and derange all the beautiful balances they have formed."¹

The tenor of all his letters to Adams discloses his uncertainty as to the final course to be taken by France. He had negotiated an arrangement for arms and money in the previous summer, but the French government hesitated after the preliminaries had been settled; great quantities of arms and ammunition, however, were secretly sent, and De Vergennes, the French Premier, had watched warily for the proper moment to recognize the new republic. Franklin and Lee were unable to fathom the intentions of the Court, and the latter inclined to the belief that direct aid from France was not to be expected. But the news of Burgoyne's capture gave no room for further hesitation; and in February of the following year, the treaty of alliance and commerce with the United States was ratified. Replying to the letters of his friend, Mr. Adams says:—

¹ Letters of Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, Paris, Sept. 9, October 4, and November, 1777.

"Although I have not hitherto acknowledged to you the receipt of them, I assure you I have been, and am still, improving the intelligence you have given me, to the best of my power, for the advantage of this country. From our former correspondence, you have known my sentiments. I have not altered them in a single point, either in regard to the great cause we are engaged in or to you, who have been an early, vigilant, and active supporter of it. While you honor me with your confidential letters, I feel, and will freely express to you, my obligation. To have answered them severally would have led me to subjects of great delicacy, and the miscarriage of my letters might have proved detrimental to our important affairs. It was needless for me to run the risk for the sake of writing; for I presume you have been made fully acquainted with the state of our public affairs by the committee; and as I have constantly communicated to your brother R. H. the contents of your letters to me, it was sufficient on that score for him only to write, *for he thinks as I do.*

"The Marquis de La Fayette, who does me the honor to take this letter, is this moment going, which leaves me time only to add, that I am, and will be, your friend, because I know you love our country and mankind. I beg you to write to me by every opportunity."¹

The ominous silence of the British Ministry described by Arthur Lee was the precursor of the unwelcome tidings, which seem to have been anticipated for some unexplained reason. A strong party still existed in Parliament who opposed the war and the method of conducting it, and, with all the power of England's greatest oratory, repeated the warnings and predictions which from time to time had been thundered forth in those halls, as the successive measures of the headstrong King and his ministers were carried into execution. Chatham, on his crutches, but yet a giant in eloquence, led the opposition, as of old, in the House of Lords; while in the Commons, Burke and Barré, the tried champions of America, with Fox, who had now risen to the first eminence, denounced the ministers and their policy. Lord

¹ Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee, Yorktown, Oct. 26, 1777.

North, who had formerly vowed, in the presence of England's peers, that he would never yield any portion of his policy, "until he had laid America prostrate at his feet," had already failed in one project of conciliation ; but he was yet so ignorant of the American character as to imagine that conciliatory propositions would be now entertained ; and in the following winter he brought forward his plan, in which, reduced from his former exalted stand, he was willing to renounce the right of taxation, the fatal, impracticable claim whence had sprung all the difficulties which separated the two countries. Five commissioners were also to be appointed, with ample powers to treat for peace, based upon the establishment of the royal authority. These delusive schemes of course failed, but they illustrate the powerful effect upon all parties in England of Burgoyne's defeat. It was the first gleam of light to the cause, which had reached its lowest ebb. It awakened England to a sense of the immense resources and unconquerable spirit of the country they essayed to subjugate ; was the signal for France to throw off her reserve, and acknowledge the independence of the States ; and gave new life to every department of the war, encouraging the troops, facilitating the enlistments, restoring the credit of Congress, and effectually quelling the rising spirit of Toryism, which had increased in boldness with every disaster.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Samuel and John Adams return to Massachusetts. — Cabal against Washington during their Absence. — Attempt to remove him from the Chief Command. — The Massachusetts Delegates not connected with it. — Subsequent Writers associate Samuel Adams with the Scheme. — Hancock the Originator of the Misstatement. — Adams disdains to reply. — Hancock's Malignant Animosity. — Indignation of the Intimate Friends of Adams. — Botta and Gordon receive the False Impression. — The Charges fabricated for Political Purposes. — Adams a sincere Admirer of Washington and his hearty Supporter in Congress.

ON the 7th of November, Samuel and John Adams having attended the Articles of Confederation nearly to their adoption, satisfied with the aspect of affairs in the North, and aware that the military operations for the year were terminated, obtained leave to return to Massachusetts. The elder Adams had been steadily at his post since October of the previous year. At no time in the history of the Revolution were the silent and unheralded labors of the Congress conducted under such difficulties, anxieties, and discouragements. The two men who now turned their faces homeward had worked side by side, and, as far as can be ascertained, disagreed in no essential point. With them, taking as laborious a part as either, Elbridge Gerry, a man of indefatigable industry and great practical abilities, had borne his burden, standing at the head of the financial department, and doubtless originating most of the plans by which Congress, without credit, had been enabled to struggle through difficulties, creating money out of nothing, as by the agency of Alladin's lamp. Gerry and Lovell, the latter recently released from captivity in Halifax, and now elected to Congress from Massachusetts, remained to represent their native Province. Hancock had taken leave of Congress, and returned home on the last day of October.

Leaving Yorktown Nov. 11th, the two Adamses took the route of Lancaster and Reading, and on the 18th, having crossed the Hudson at Continental Ferry, dined at the Doctors' mess at Fishkill, with Dr. Samuel Adams, Dr. Eustis, Mr. Wells, and others. Thence they rode through Litchfield and Springfield to Boston,¹ where they arrived on the 4th of December. Here Mr. Adams resumed his duties as Secretary of State, and did not leave Boston until the following May.

During his absence, a project was discovered, in which a number of prominent persons in the army and perhaps a few members of Congress were concerned, for the removal of Washington from the chief command, with the alleged view of superseding him with General Gates. As the name of Samuel Adams has been habitually associated with such a scheme, more than one writer in the last century having designated him as its supposed author and leader, a rehearsal of the facts as furnished by contemporary evidence, and by the writings of Samuel Adams himself on this interesting subject, becomes necessary. The wilful misstatements which originally fastened such a ~~design~~ upon him have been so often repeated by successive writers on the Revolution, inadvertently quoting for facts what was without foundation, that something more than a mere denial seems to be demanded. If there were any other associates besides the several army officers known to have been connected with the cabal, the evidences cannot now be found. That any considerable party existed in Congress favorable to such a scheme seems hardly probable; while an examination of the facts disburden the Massachusetts delegates of any complicity, though the contrary appears to have been the commonly received opinion in after times, supported, however, by no adequate proofs. The cabal, in any connection it may have had with Congress, could scarcely have assumed a noticeable shape by November; for the two Adamses left

¹ John Adams's Diary (Works, II. 441, 442).

Congress early in that month, and had any measure aiming at so momentous a result as the removal of Washington been seriously entertained, it cannot be supposed that these eminent members, knowing it, would have absented themselves. Evidently no such scheme was suspected up to this time; and that Gerry was ignorant of its existence clearly appears by a letter from General Knox in the following January, when the cabal had begun to grow into importance. The writer says, referring to a recent conversation at Yorktown:—

“The subjects then started appeared to me of such magnitude and pregnant with such consequences, that I freely confess that I wished to have had my mind relieved from some painful apprehensions which might possibly have been taken up without sufficient information. You then seemed to think that the matter which was mentioned improbable and impossible; and it appeared so to me too; but intrigue, misinformation, caprice, and unsuccessful efforts combined may very probably have had effects on the minds of good men. How far these have been practised you best know. I think, from the conversation General G. and we had together, you will be able to recollect enough to have a clew to this paragraph, which may otherwise be obscure.”¹

Samuel and John Adams were equally unaware of a project for the removal of Washington, or any casual hints to that effect were not considered of sufficient importance to demand a delay of their visit home. Richard Henry Lee had written in October to Washington, asking his opinion as to making Conway a Major-General, to which Washington at once replied, objecting to the promotion. Notwithstanding this dissent, the appointment was made, but more than a month subsequent to the departure of the Adamses. This opposition to Washington's wishes, therefore, cannot be associated with them. Appearances would rather indicate that the plot was delayed until their absence, which would leave a clearer field for operation. Not only the promotion of

¹ General Knox to E. Gerry, Jan. 4, 1778 (Austin's Life of Gerry, I. 238).

Conway occurred when the Adamsses were away, but all the correspondence which has been collected on the subject was of a date subsequent to their leaving Congress, and much of it at a time when Samuel Adams was at home engaged in his official duties, and John Adams following his profession in the law courts. The anonymous letter to Patrick Henry, in which occurs the passage, — “America can only be undone by herself. She looks up to her councils and arms for protection; but, alas! where are they? Her representation in Congress dwindled to only twenty-one members: her Adams, her Wilson, her Henry are no more among them,” — this letter, written on the 12th of January, Samuel Adams never saw or heard of until more than ten years afterwards.

Gates, Conway, and Mifflin were the chief agents in this movement, which with them was based upon selfish, unworthy views, dishonest in their intentions towards Washington, and in all respects dangerous to the American cause. Gates was without the qualities requisite for the trying emergencies in which Washington, as much by the grandeur of his character and his remarkable moderation as by feats of arms, preserved harmony and maintained the Revolution. Burning for victories which might remove from the American character the stigma which the world had begun to attach to it from repeated disasters and retreats, Samuel Adams at times questioned the Fabian policy of Washington, and among a few confidential friends he perhaps expressed doubts, but never in a manner to lessen the respect due to the chief of the army; while his habitual caution forbade him to hazard the slightest allusion to the subject in his letters, which he was conscious were liable to fall into the hands of the enemy. These expressions of his anxiety may, in part, have given rise to the report of his unfriendliness towards Washington. The fact that the whole Massachusetts delegation had addressed Washington during the past summer in favor of Gates for the Northern Department; the high opinion in which Adams was known to hold the

military attainments of that officer, and the publication of a series of spurious letters, purporting to have been written by Washington, in which, after expressing himself hostile to American interests, he is made to compliment the talents of Samuel Adams, — these, perhaps, assisted in giving currency to the report.¹

But the real origin of the story could not greatly have surprised Adams, if, under the circumstances, it at all disconcerted him. That source was John Hancock, who had left Yorktown for Boston shortly before his colleague, deeply incensed against him, and nourishing enmity which had increased from the time that Adams expressed in an unreserved manner his disapprobation of Hancock's political course prior to the signing of the Declaration. This had latterly culminated in some circumstance which was narrated by Adams in a letter to his wife, and distantly alluded to in his correspondence with James Warren. This letter, with many others, disappeared from among his papers shortly after the death of his widow in 1808; and it is probable that the particular cause of Hancock's acrimony will never be brought to light. It is certain that something had occurred which caused Adams to lose all esteem for his associate, and led him to decline a renewal of an intercourse which was liable to be at any time again interrupted. In the subsequent political divisions consequent upon this rupture, Hancock was violent in the expressions of his animosity, and, in a number of instances, carried it to extremes which would have been unworthy even of an inferior man. On all suitable occasions, Adams frankly expressed his opinion of Hancock's disqualification for the high offices in Massachusetts for which he was proposed, and of the consequences that might ensue by confiding great trusts to hands incapable of managing them. He opposed him in the election for the Presidency of the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention in 1779, and strongly disapproved of the routs,

¹ New York Gazetteer, March 7, 1778.

parades, and example of extravagance given by Hancock during his several terms as Governor, at a time when the country was groaning under the weight of insupportable liabilities, and murmurs of discontent were heard at the necessary taxations levied to meet the public debt.

Hancock's enmity to Adams, in their several alienations which have already been described, had never arisen to the point which it reached about the time of their now leaving Congress. As President of that body, his residence was provided for him at the public charge, and all his household expenses were paid in the same manner. His style of living, always ostentatious, and now, in the darkest hour of the country's peril, abating nothing of its usual display, seems to have interfered with his official duties, and it became at length necessary to pass a resolution directing the President to be in the chair in time for the prompt despatch of business; and on the day of Hancock's departure nearly the entire New England delegation had felt it to be their duty to vote in the negative on a motion to present him the thanks of Congress for his unremitted attention and steady impartiality in the discharge of his duties; and the same votes were recorded against thanking any President for the performance of his duties. This was a mortal offence to his vanity; and though John Adams and Gerry, having voted against him, must have received a share of his displeasure, he appears to have levelled his resentment particularly against Samuel Adams. The younger Adams being presently sent to Europe, and Gerry remaining in Congress, Samuel Adams was especially the person whose great character now seemed likely to outweigh Hancock's wealth and popular manners in any competition for high station in Massachusetts. But Hancock here misjudged his colleague, who was already quite willing to quit public life, and had no aspirations for continued political preferment. The Adamses on their way home, as they passed through Pennsylvania and New Jersey, found the traces of Hancock, who had

preceded them a week on the road, attended by a body-guard, curiously in contrast with their own plain and quiet mode of travelling. John Adams wrote in his Diary:—

“The taverners all along are complaining of the guard of light horse which attended Mr. H——. They did not pay, and the taverners were obliged to go after them to demand their dues. The expense, which is supposed to be the country's, is unpopular. The Tories laugh at the tavern-keepers, who have often turned them out of their houses for abusing Mr. H. They now scoff at them for being imposed upon by their king, as they call him. Vanity is always mean, vanity is never rich enough to be generous.”¹

Samuel Adams alluded to the hostility of Hancock only when his wife or friends mentioned it in their letters in such a manner as to demand a reply; but this was very seldom. He preferred to maintain a dignified silence on a subject which he seems to have dismissed from his thoughts as unworthy serious consideration. He could “forgive Hancock, and forget him too,” and, turning from the “trifling matter,” devoted himself to his country's struggle for liberty.

Leaving Yorktown with the bitterest feelings of hatred, Hancock before long conceived the idea of rendering his colleague, if possible, odious to the public, by setting in motion the report, among others equally groundless, that Samuel Adams was an enemy of Washington, and had been engaged in the scheme to remove him from the chief command. Though it was long before he himself recovered from the mortification of being passed over as a candidate for that position in the summer of 1775,² Hancock gradually found it to his advantage to profess the most ardent friendship for the General, whose fame and popularity was steadily on the increase after the discovery of the cabal. But the injurious statements against Samuel Adams he now set

¹ John Adams's Diary, Nov. 17, 1777 (Works, II. 441).

² See, *ante*, Chap. XXXVII.

abroad in person and by his satellites, until, by the frequent repetition, the idea was generally received; and the historians of the time — both foreigners, alive to every probable rumor — caught at this, and made it a part of their narratives. Gordon's statement is as follows:—

“Several members of Congress were engaged in the business; some of the Massachusetts delegates, particularly Mr. Samuel Adams. The army was so confident of it, and so enraged, that persons were stationed to watch him as he approached the camp, on his return home. But he is commonly possessed of good intelligence, and was careful to keep at a safe distance. Had he fallen into the hands of the officers, when in that paroxysm of resentment, they would probably have handled him so as to have endangered his life and tarnished their own honor.”¹

Upon reading this, after the independence of the country had been achieved, and Washington was elected to the Presidency, Samuel Adams, while discussing the extent of the executive power, took occasion to refute the statement. True greatness, undisturbed by the attacks of malice, rarely stoops to defend itself from the petty annoyance. Thus Washington would never have condescended, many years after the Revolution, to notice the spurious letters written during the existence of the cabal, had not the revival of them for political purposes made it seem necessary. With a similar innate dignity, Adams considered it beneath him to deny publicly the misrepresentations relating to himself; and the truth at last appears only from his private correspondence. Several years after the Revolution, when writing to one of his most intimate friends, and referring to Washington, who had lately been installed under the newly established Constitution, he says:—

“I need not tell *you*, who have known so thoroughly the sentiments of my heart, that I have always had a very high esteem for the late Commander-in-Chief of our armies; and I now most sin-

¹ Gordon, III. 57.

cerely believe that, while President Washington continues in the chair, he will be able to give to all good men a satisfactory reason for every instance of his public conduct. I feel myself constrained, contrary to my usual manner, to make *professions* of sincerity on this occasion, because Dr. Gordon, in his History of the Revolution, among many other anecdotes, innocent and trifling enough, has gravely said that I was concerned in an attempt to remove General Washington from command, and mentions an anonymous letter written to your late Governor Henry, which I affirm I never saw nor heard of till I lately met with it in reading the History. This is a digression to which a man of my years is liable.”¹

The absurdity of Gordon’s account is apparent, when we remember that the cabal could not, by the middle of November, have reached such a point as to have exasperated the soldiery against any person so as to oblige him to avoid the camp; much less so conspicuous a character as Samuel Adams, and Adams had reached home long before the plot had attained a wide notoriety. But the story is exploded by John Adams’s Diary, where a circumstantial account is given of the journey home; but nothing is said of any apprehended danger from American soldiers, which, had it existed, would not have escaped notice. Botta’s assertion, doubtless originating in the same source, equally falls to the ground, even were the denial in the above letter the only refutation. Botta says:—

“It was believed at the time that the members of Congress from Massachusetts, and particularly Samuel Adams, had never been able to brook that the supreme command of all the armies should have been conferred on a Virginian, to the exclusion of the generals of their Province, who then enjoyed a reputation not inferior and perhaps superior to that of Washington. It appeared also that these delegates, being the most zealous partisans of the Revolution, were far from approving the moderation of the Commander-in-Chief. They would have preferred placing at the head of affairs a more ardent and decided republican; and it is asserted that they were on

¹ S. Adams to R. H. Lee, August 29, 1789.

the point of demanding an inquiry into the causes of the unsuccessful issue of the campaigns of the years 1776 and 1777.”¹

The historian is here particularly unfortunate. So far from the Massachusetts members being dissatisfied with the appointment of Washington, that delegation, with the exception of Hancock, were directly instrumental in placing him at the head of the army, — Gerry, for himself and Joseph Warren, having recommended, while John and Samuel Adams nominated him. No Massachusetts general can be mentioned who was in any way a rival of Washington, much less was any considered his superior ; and, finally, the recent vote thanking him for his wise and judicious policy at the battle of Germantown, and the reconferring of absolute power, is quite inconsistent with the alleged conspiracy against him among members of this Congress. Richard Henry Lee, Samuel Adams, and Wilson constituted the committee who, during the disaster of the previous winter, had recommended giving dictatorial power to Washington.² Lee and Adams seldom, if ever, disagreed on any political point, and no doubt the acquiescence of Wilson made the report unanimous. Now, when calamities had again overtaken the patriot arms, the voice of Congress attests to their continued confidence in his conduct of the war, even to ordering a medal to be struck in his honor.³ In a month from this time, the Adamses were on their way home, evidently unsuspecting of any plot to overthrow him by members of Congress, if any such plot existed in that body. The creation of a new Board of War, to which Gates and Mifflin were chosen, and their recommendation of extensive war measures, which Congress adopted without consulting Washington, all took place during the absence of the Adamses, both of whom had been members, but were now omitted from the new Board. The Journals of Congress had not

¹ Botta's History, Philadelphia, 1820, etc., 8o, II. 399.

² Journals of Congress, Dec. 26 and 27, 1776.

³ *Id.*, Oct. 8, 1777.

been printed when Botta wrote, or he might have been slower to adopt the statements of interested persons in a work which, for elegance of style and general faithfulness, has become a classic.

The letters of Adams, already quoted, show his constant friendship for Washington. "I am exceedingly pleased," he says, "with the calm and determined spirit which our Commander-in-Chief has discovered in all his letters to Congress. May Heaven guide and prosper him." This was in the previous summer. Adams's estimate of Washington was too deeply grounded in good judgment to be changed by subsequent reverses. At the close of the war he says:—

"The reputation he has justly acquired by his conduct while Commander-in-Chief of our armies, and the gratitude and warm affection which his countrymen do, and ought to, feel towards him, will probably give weight to anything he patronizes, and lustre to all who may be connected with him."¹

Wherever Samuel Adams makes the slightest allusion to Washington, in letter or speech, it is in cheerful and unhesitating admiration of that great character. From the time he seconded his nomination as Commander-in-Chief until his extreme old age, the record is the same. When Washington left Philadelphia to take command at Cambridge, Adams wrote to his friends in Massachusetts, urging them to receive him with the consideration due to his inestimable worth, and the new Commander bore letters from him to the principal men of the Province. They retired to private life nearly at the same time, at the close of the century, the one from the Presidency of the nation, and the other from the Chief-Magistracy of Massachusetts; and the parting address of the venerable Adams to the Legislature, in 1797, contained a tribute to the greatness of Washington,—his purity of intention and disinterested zeal through many years of public service. Mrs. Mercy Warren, a woman of high

¹ To E. Gerry, April 23, 1784 (Austin's Gerry, I. 425).

cultivation and intelligence, a correspondent of Samuel Adams, and, through her husband's intimacy with him, well able to speak with a knowledge of the facts, says, in reference to the cabal:—

“There never were sufficient grounds to suppose that Mr. Adams ever harbored any disaffection to the person of General Washington; on the contrary, he respected and esteemed his character and loved the man. But zealous and ardent in the defence of his injured country, he was startled at everything that appeared to retard the operations of war or impede the success of the Revolution, — a revolution for which posterity is as much indebted to the talents and exertions of Mr. Adams as to those of any one in the United States.”¹

The next year after the cabal, when Hancock in Boston and his party were industriously exerting themselves against Adams, who was then absent in Congress, a friend wrote him the particulars of what was happening at home. Adams, in his reply, says:—

“The arts they make use of are contemptible. Last year, as you observe, I was an enemy to Washington. This was said to render me odious to the people. The man who fabricated the charge did not believe it himself. When he endeavored to make others believe it, he attempted to injure me by imposing upon them. His own heart must therefore reproach him with complicated acts of injustice, and, if he has any feeling, he must despise himself. If I indulged the spirit of revenge, could I wish for more?”²

And, again, in one of the many pleasant letters to his wife, he says:—

“James Rivington has published in his Royal Gazette that the acrimony between Hancock and me was owing to his attachment to General Washington, and my being, on the contrary, desirous of his removal. This is an old story which men have believed and disbelieved as they pleased, without much concern of mine. It was a pitiful contrivance to render me obnoxious to the General and our

¹ History of the Revolution, I. 394.

² S. Adams to J. Warren, March 23, 1779.

common friends. If there has been any difference between Mr. H. and me, Rivington knows not the origin of it. Mr. Hancock never thought me an enemy of General Washington. He never thought I was desirous of his being removed, and therefore he could never treat me with acrimony on that account. I never wished for the removal of General Washington; but if I had even attempted to effect it, it would have been an evidence of my deficiency in judgment or rashness, but it could be no evidence that I was his enemy.”¹

Extracts from other private letters to the same effect, to and from Adams, might be cited to illustrate Hancock's vindictive and petty persecution, and false statements connecting Adams with the cabal; but aside from the fact that these would display traits of character which are best consigned to oblivion, the quotations already given are conclusive upon the point. Thacher seems to have heard from some authentic source of the injustice done his ancient friend in times gone by; for he says, in his funeral discourse, speaking of the great soul of Adams, that “his sensibility was equally wounded by the *neglect* of his friends and by the *malignity* of his enemies; and that under each he was triumphant.” James Warren knew it when he wrote to Adams from Boston of the “persecution” there practised against him in his absence, and the falsehoods which the “tongue of malice” uttered. The next summer, wearied and perhaps saddened with this persistent system of stabbing in the dark, Adams temporarily quitted Congress, and returned to Boston. His friend Lovell, then one of his colleagues, wrote to him soon after his arrival home: “Is your name and fame still the object of the malice of *your friend*? The circle of D. Clymer's acquaintance, then, had no mercy on you at your first arrival. Take time for it, and you will discover the whole of the petty plot. But do not begin an attempt of discovery, if you doubt your stock of contempt being sufficient to blunt the edge of all chagrin.”² “Massachu-

¹ S. Adams to his wife, Feb. 1, 1781.

² James Lovell to Samuel Adams, Philadelphia, July 13, 1779.

setts," says Bancroft, "was always true to Washington; the whole mass of her population to the end of the war, and during all his life, heaved and swelled with sympathy for his fortunes; he could not make a sign to her for aid, but her sons rose up to his support, nor utter advice to his country, but they gave it reverence and heed."¹ The remark, individualized, could apply to no person in New England more aptly than to Samuel Adams, who supported Washington unhesitatingly in all his suggestions for the prosecution of the war, save in relation to granting the officers half-pay for life, towards the close of the contest, against which, for stated reasons, he recorded his vote, though the measure was recommended by the Commander-in-Chief. It was the New England troops in whom the General especially confided, during the insubordination in the New Jersey line, in 1781; and in Massachusetts, one of the most powerful engines that could be used against any public man was the accusation of having been associated with the cabal to overthrow him in the hour of his greatest anxieties and trials. The effectiveness of such a weapon was well understood by Hancock and his dependents, who spread the report with conscious impunity, aware that the character they assailed would not descend to a contradiction.

¹ Bancroft, VIII. 304, 305.

END OF VOL. II.

